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CHIH TUN'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ

THE INFLUENCE OF TAOISM
UPON CHINESE BUDDHISM
DURING THE FOURTH CENTURY
CASE STUDY: CHIH TUN'S UNDERSTANDING
OF THE PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ

By

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS:

The transmission of Indian Buddhism into China presents an excellent opportunity for a case study in the dynamics of a complex cultural interaction. The Prajñāpāramitā literature, introduced in the +2nd century, proved to be the most influential Buddhist religious texts during the following two hundred years. The Chinese interpreted these texts in terms of their own already existent philosophical categories, primarily established in the so-called Neo-taoist movement.

By the fourth century, the Chinese had assimilated the Buddhist ideas well enough to begin to create original works expressing the first Chinese understanding of these ideas. Heretofore research on these Buddho-Taoist works has indicated that the Chinese had failed to adequately comprehend this sophisticated Indian system because they had been unable to escape the confines of their own Taoist philosophical system. This research on one principal Buddho-Taoist thinker, Chih Tun, questions these conclusions.

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INTRODUCTION

I. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND GENERAL ORIENTATION

The transmission of Indian Buddhism into China presents a fertile though complex field for the student of the history of religions. What we find in this movement is the coming together of two well developed and sophisticated religio-philosophical systems, the products of two widely divergent cultural milieux. There is a considerable amount of controversy concerning the actual dynamics of this cultural confromtation. For example, the eminent Sinologist, Hu Shih, maintains that Indian Buddhism proceeded to dominate Chinese religion and philosophy until the confrontation with the West.[1] On the other hand, Walter Liebenthal states that Indian Buddhism infused the existing Chinese systems with the energy and direction that enabled them to establish new, yet essentially Chinese frontiers.[2] Arthur Link and Richard Robinson tend to see these problems in terms of a synthesis - an amalgam in which neither system retains its antecedent originality. One of the primary concerns of this study will be to carefully scrutinize the validity of each by investigating one very specific case of this meeting of cultures: the philosophy of the early Chinese Buddhist, Chih Tun.

In following these very general guidelines, we propose to

consider a particularly pregnant moment in the development of Buddhism in China. From its introduction during the second half of the + first century until about the beginning of the fourth century, Buddhism was ill comprehended by the Chinese mind. This was due in part to the misleading rendering of many key Buddhist terms by those terms already eminent in the Chinese philosophical domain, and due in part to the fact that the Buddhist texts were presented in a helter-skelter fashion, completely diversed from the various philosophical and cultural milieux out of which each emerged. Chinese Buddhist intellectual activity during this time was confined almost exclusively to translation and concomitant attempts at comprehension. The two main textual currents that dominated this period were those of: 1. the *dhyāna* manuals of various Indian sects, translated due to their affinity with prevailing "religious" or *hsien* Taoist meditational practices. This trend was initiated by the Parthian An Shih-kao circa +150; 2. the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, a trend initiated by the Indo-Scythian Lokaksema ca. +180 with a translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*. As we shall see, this latter current came to be of particular importance in the period with which we are to be concerned.

By the beginning of the fourth century, the Chinese had made sufficient progress in the assimilation of the new religion that they were able to begin to express their own understanding of certain of its problems. This was most frequently put in the form

of prefaces or commentaries to translations of original Indian source materials. It was during this period that Buddhism, primarily that of the Prajñāpāramitā had come to penetrate the life and thought of the cultured upper classes where it made contact with the already flourishing hsüan-hsüeh (Dark Learning, popularly known as the Neo-Taoist) movement. The product of this contact was a group of texts which Paul Demieville refers to as ". . . les premières oeuvres originales de qualité dues à des bouddhistes chinois".[4] This corpus of literature is significant not only because it represents the first genuinely Chinese Buddhist writings, but also because within it the foundation were established for many of the problems that were to occupy prominent positions in the numerous schools that later arose in China and Japan. Because these works represent the first attempt by the Chinese to set forth their understanding of the significant problems of Buddhism, they afford an excellent source for a case study in the dynamics of a highly complex cultural interaction. We have chosen for our investigation to select from this corpus, which has come to be known as "Buddho-Taoist", the writings of a man who is perhaps the first significant member of this movement.[5]

There is little doubt that the most influential Indian Buddhist texts in this movement were the Prajñāpāramitā. They were so highly esteemed because the cultured Chinese saw in them quite definite similarities to the hsüan hsüeh gnostic speculations that had been the central focus of their searches and debates concerning

the meaning and nature of existence during the chaotic century following the collapse of the great Han dynasty. Given the fact that the subject of our research, Chih Tun, addressed himself to Buddhist problems, it is altogether quite reasonable that our study of cultural interaction should focus on the native Chinese influence upon his understanding of Buddhism. And given the specific Chinese and Buddhist material with which he dealt, it is also quite reasonable for our study to focus upon the impact of Taoism, particularly as it appears in the hsüan hsüeh movement, upon his comprehension of the doctrines of the Prajñāpāramitā.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Taoist Influence: Terminology

Perhaps the most difficult problem that we shall face in our study is to come to a viable understanding of just what constitutes a "Taoist influence". One mode of approach to this problem is an analysis of specific terms. For example, if in following this approach we were to discover the predominant occurrence of terms that occur in the metaphysical vocabulary of the hsüan hsüeh, then we might conclude that the text under consideration shows a Taoist influence. Unfortunately, the texts of this period attain a level of terminological complexity that cannot be met by this approach alone. As Robinson has stated, the writings of the Buddha-Taoists were intentionally created to sound ". . . Taoist to the Taoist, Buddhist to those who knew, and aesthetically pleasing to everyone . . .".[6]

What does he mean by this?

To begin with, one of the principal modes of explication of Buddhist ideas in the Taoistically-oriented learned circles of this time was known as ko-yi, or "matching meanings".[7] In this, the explicator of a certain Buddhist notion would select an idea from the prevailing Taoist milieu that he thought would make the Buddhist notion comprehensible to his audience. For example, we are told that Hui-yuan, founder of the Buddhist monastic community on Lu-shan and early Master in the Pure Land Sect, won much acclaim for explaining certain Prajñāpāramitā notions that his audience had found difficult to grasp with the vocabulary and ideas of the Chuang Tzu.[8] A modern scholar reading this discourse might quite naturally think that the explicator himself, in this case Hui-yuan, understood the Buddhist notions in just these Taoist terms; and might rush to the conclusion of a Taoist influence. However this would ignore the quite distinct possibility that the explicator understood these notions differently. In fact would not it rather be the case that his very use of this method of exegesis would demand an understanding that exceeded the one expressed within the particular limitations of the Taoist context?[8a] For example, if, in talking to a group of modern Western Christians, I were to equate nirvana with "Godhead", would it mean that I understood this former notion only in terms of the latter? Furthermore, practices such as ko-yi were viewed during this period as one of the primary modes of practising the cardinal

Mahayana virute of upāya-kauśalya, "skill-in-means". This involves in effect suiting one's discourse to the audience's ability to comprehend it.

Furthermore, in translating the Prajñāpāramitā texts the Chinese quite naturally used terms already present in the gnostic philosophical milieu of the times. And of course, this milieu was dominated by Neo-Taoist terms. Hence, for example, translations occurred such as the following: śūnyatā as k'ung-hui (lit. "Void-wisdom"); svabhāva as tzu-jan ("self-so, nature, etc.); tāthatā as pen wu ("original non-being"); bodhi as Tao; nirvana as wu wei ("non-action").[9] Thus if we were to discover one of these Taoist terms in a Chinese Buddhist original text of this period, there would be no guarantee that the author understood or intended it in the same way as it was understood or intended by a hsüan hsüeh author. Thus, however much may be gained from an approach that is limited to terminological analysis, it is simply not by itself an adequate methodology.

One adjustment to the terminological approach is suggested by Robinson. He finds it necessary that before one draws conclusions about the doctrinal affinity of a particular text based upon an analysis of vocabulary that one distinguish clearly between the "rhetorical apparatus" and the "technical vocabulary". The former he characterizes as the "devices of persuasion"; the latter he characterizes as the "devices of exposition".[10] This distinction takes into account the contextual framework in which a given idea

is expressed, its mode of expression, and the intentionality of the author. If this distinction is kept in mind it can help us to avoid certain of the difficulties created for us by the practice of "skill-in-means" by the fourth century Chinese Buddhists.

Another adjustment to the terminological approach is to compare the use of a term in a given text of one period or school with the use of this same term in another text of a different period or school. This method has been used by both Demieville and Chan in their studies of li, and by Chan in his study of jen.[11] With this developmental method one can use the term as a measure by which to contrast the texts within which it occurs. Adapting this method, we shall examine certain terms important in the Dark Learning that are also used by Chih Tun in an effort to ascertain whether or not any differences are to be found.

It must be added here that while we adapt an analysis of certain important terms with the appropriate qualifications discussed above, we are cognizant of the fact that a term is but a symbol, the significance of which is constituted by the idea that it characterizes. In studying terms we are in effect studying ideas. And although the term as symbol (becoming comprehensible when taken in conjunction with the other symbols of its milieu) serves as the primary surviving evidence of the thought of humans that lived, in this case, fifteen centuries ago, we must not lose sight of the fact that what we attempt to study is not (to use Chuang-tzu's analogy) the fish-net but the fish.

B. Taoist Influence: Patterns

Not being content to rely on terminology alone, Liebenthal introduces another approach to the analysis of influence. Taking us back one level of abstraction from the terms alone, this approach attempts to view these terms and ideas in a somewhat broader perspective by focusing on what Liebenthal calls a "pattern". A pattern is a single feature in the "interpretive milieu" that is present in a given culture. It is an element in a particular world view or world interpretation, an element that persists through time. By Liebenthal's definition a pattern is transferable and can appear in a "milieu" (i.e. context) different from the one in which it originated. For example, a pattern originally derived from cosmology can be transferred to political or social theory where it can also serve as an underlying structure to thought, or a "motif". Liebenthal explains through examples:

> . . . the engine in the West became a pattern immediately after its invention (l'homme machine); and there are physicists who interpret the whole world as a machine in the same way that Taoists interpret 'all that occurs' as awakening from an initial inertial state, or Indian philosophers interpret world evolution as proliferation of an initial principle. Hundreds of these interpretations exist which gradually become creeds and lead to the imposition of moral rules and even laws.[13]

The particular pattern with which Liebenthal is concerned, the <u>t'i-yung</u>, will be explained in greater detail below. It is a pattern characteristic of Taoist thought, one which became emphasized and developed during the <u>hsüan hsüeh</u> movement. As such it quite

readily lends itself to use as a measure of Taoist influence upon the Chinese Buddhists of the fourth century. Liebenthal certainly uses it in this manner; and following him, we shall use it too.

Thus our methodology concerning Taoist influence will be to develop a clear understanding of a number of terms and patterns that are essential to the Dark Leaning and then to apply this understanding to Chih Tun's comprehension of the doctrines of the *Prajñāpāramitā*.

C. The Core Problem Area

There are certainly a wide variety of topics that are dealt with in the Neo-Taoist, the *Prajñāpāramitā*, and the Chih Tun material. In order to bring our investigation into a sharper focus we must elucidate the problem area within which we shall be confined. One of the central concerns in all three categories of material is the presentation of a conceptualization of the meaning and nature of existence. These theories about "reality" are what would in Western philosophical circles come under the heading of "ontology". In Buddhism and Taoism, this classification must be used with caution since although we are dealing with notions of phenomena and noumena, at no time are these noumena to be identified as "Being". Thus we must make it clear that whenever we use the term "ontology", it is done in full awareness of this essential qualification.

Since reality-theories are to be found in, and to varying degrees underly and interfuse the material in all three categories of texts, they can serve as a useful measure by which to compare them. And to the extent that they are relevant to these theories, both epistemological and soteriological problems will also be considered. We do not intend to establish any of these problem areas as hard and fast categories. Rather, we intend them to remain in the background serving to structure our inquiry by directing the selection of the kinds of ideas with which we shall be concerned. Hence, the core problem area that will focus our inquiry and serve as the primary basis of comparison of the ideas of our three categories of material will be "ontology".

D. The Mechanics of Comparison

The early Chinese translations of the Prajñāpāramitā literature played a decisive role in the development of Chinese Buddhism. Due to the fact that the Chinese perceived a close affinity between these Indian ontological doctrines and their own Dark Learning, the Prajñā literature was able to serve as the primary stimulus for the first original Chinese Buddhist writings. Thus it is quite fitting that, keeping in mind the general concern with the dynamics of cultural interaction, that our investigation will focus on elucidating how well the Chinese of this period understood these certain of the more

subtle and sophisticated problems of the Indian philosophical tradition. The general consensus of modern research has been that until the advent of the monumental translation project of Kumarajiva (who arrived at Ch'ang-an circa +401), the Chinese were, in general, quite in the dark as to the understanding of these abstruse Indian metaphysical doctrines. For example, Hurvitz, in his pioneer work on Chih Tun, states:

> . . . this is not of course to say that the Prajñāpāramitā was accurately understood in China. On the contrary, it was almost certainly misunderstood.[14]

The basic concern of our investigation will be to ascertain just how well Chih Tun, author of some of the earliest original Chinese Buddhist material, understood the Prajñāpāramitā doctrines. In order to do this, the following procedure will be executed.

To begin with, the core problem area will be ontology with its corrollaries of epistemology and soteriology as stated above. Keeping these in mind we shall carefully examine the extant writings of Chih Tun and compare and contrast his understanding of the Prajñāpāramitā with both the Neo-Taoist terms and patterns and with a carefully elucidated study of the Indian Prajña system. Using this latter as a kind of base line, we will be able to examine to what extent Chih Tun's comprehension deviates from the Indian model and to what extent this deviation can be attributed to the Neo-Taoist handling of the same or similar problems. Giving a bit more weight to the Indian antecedents than to the Chinese, our approach is more

analogous to that of Robinson's research on Seng-chao than to that of Liebenthal. However, by considering in more detail the Chinese background than did Robinson, we hope to present a more balanced approach.

There is however one difficulty with our approach proposed as it is. The problem centers on our derivation of an understanding of the Indian *Prajñā* system. The only versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā* that have been translated into Chinese before Kumarajiva are the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* and the *Pañcaviṁśati-sāhasrikā*. The earliest surviving Indian manuscripts of these texts are by comparison quite recent, dating from the Pala Dynasty (ca, +1200). According to Conze, there must have been a prototypic "ur" manuscript from which both the Indian source for the extant Chinese and the extant versions descended; but this has long since been lost.[15] Now since we are forced to derive our understanding of the Indian *Prajñā* system from manuscripts that are at least one thousand years later than the Indian ones from which the Chinese translations were made, how can we be sure that an understanding derived from so late a source will give us an accurate representation of the *Prajñā* ideas that were available to the Buddha-Taoists? Or, in other words, are the early Chinese versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā* at all comparable in their handling of the core problem areas to the Pala Dynasty Sanskrit text?

Since the Chinese versions have never been translated into any Western language, it is quite fortunate that the doctoral dissertation of Lewis R. Lancaster addresses itself to precisely this question in a study that focuses on the _Aṣṭa_. Before discussing his research, a bit of historical background must be presented.

There are three versions of the _Aṣṭa_ and two of the _Pañca_ that were translated into Chinese in the first stage of the development of Buddhism there. These are: _Aṣṭa_: 1. _Tao-hsing Pan-jo Ching_, Lokaksema, ca. +180 A.D. (Taisho 224); 2. _Ta Ming Tu Ching_, Chih Ch'ien?, ca. +225 A.D. (T.225); 3. _Mo-ho Pan-jo Ching_ (partial, 13 chapters), Dharmakriya +382 or Dharmaraksa +265 (T.226).[16] With the exception of the first chapter of T.225, there is a very high degree of correlation between the structure and content of these three texts; so much so that Lancaster groups them together as representing the "early" textual tradition.[17] The _Pañca_ versions: 1. _Kuang-tsan Ching_, Dharmaraksa _286 (T.222 - only 27 chapters extant)[18]; 2. _Fang Kuang Ching_, Moksala, +291, revised +304 (T.221).[19] Of these translations, the most popular and influential were Lokakssema's _Aṣṭa_ (T.224) and Moksala's _Pañca_ (T.221). These two served as the bases for the different interpretations of the doctrine of _śūnyatā_ that led to the formation of the indegenous Chinese "schools" of Buddhism that developed in the fourth century (including that of Chih Tun).[20] It is likely

that these provided the material for Chih Tun's "Synoptic Extract of the Larger and Smaller Versions (of the Prajñāpāramitā)" (now lost), the preface to which will be considered in detail below. There is no concrete evidence that any other translations of the Prajñās were executed during this first phase of Chinese Buddhism.[21]

As to the degree of correlation between the early Chinese textual tradition of the Aṣṭa and the Pala Dynasty Sanskrit text, Lancaster comes to the following conclusions. While the text used for the translations of T.224, 225, 226 must have been much less developed than the surviving Sanskrit version, a number of the essential doctrines of the latter are indeed present in these Chinese versions.[22] These are: Bodhisattva, upāya-kauśalya, prajñāpāramitā, tāthatā, and the "two truths".[23] More specifically, a significant number of the passages that deal with these doctrines in the Pala text are present in the early Chinese texts. Of these, the last three are of particular importance from our standpoint since they go to the heart of the Prajñā ontology. As Lancaster says, " 'Suchness' (tāthatā) is closely tied to the Mahayana doctrine of śūnyatā and is another way of expressing the Absolute . . ."[24]. Hence the central notions of the ontology of the Prajñāpāramitā are in fact present in the earliest Chinese textual tradition of the Aṣṭa. Indeed, Robinson, in commenting upon the quality of Lokaksema's T.224 says that ". . . A patient and methodical reader

could master the essentials of *Śūnyāvadā* from it . . ."[25] .

Given this acceptable level of correlation between the early Chinese and the Pala Sanskrit texts' handling of our core problems, we conclude that it is justified to derive our understanding of the Indian *Prajñāpāramitā* system from this latter text, and that it is likewise justifiable to use this understanding as a base from which to compare and evaluate Chih Tun's comprehension of these problems in light of the related Neo Taoist terms and patterns. This then, in brief, will be our methodology.[26]

CHAPTER 1: THE TERMS AND PATTERNS OF THE HSÜAN HSÜEH

The ideas we are about to discuss represent the primary ontological (and related) problems of the Dark Learning. These ideas are most prominently discussed in the commentaries on the I Ching and the Tao Te Ching by Wang Pi (226-49) and in the commentary on the Chuang Tzu written by Hsiang Hsiu (221?-300?) and Kuo Hsiang (d. 312).[1] It was due to the perceived similarities between these ideas and those of the Prajñāpāramitā (hereinafter referred to as Pp) that this Indian system was able to expand into the circles of the cultured gentry during the +fourth century in China.

I. The T'i-Yung Pattern

Although this pattern was given its most significant development by Wang Pi, both Petrov/Wright and Liebenthal concur that the prototype is to be found in the Tao Te Ching.[2] In brief, the framework of the pattern is this: the cosmos unfolds (in time) from an infolded (latent) state, (t'i), to an unfolded (manifest) one, (yung).[3] The latent is valued as original and blissful; the manifest is valued as decay. Therefore one cultivates oneself spiritually by returning to the origin.[4] In order to understand how this pattern is manifest, we proceed to examine certain ideas in the thought of Wang Pi.

A. The One

The t'i position in Wang's philosophy is taken by his notion of the "One", which is basically synonymous with the following terms: "the Dominant", Tao, Pen-t'i ("original substance"), and wu ("non-being", "ho-thing" etc.). Commenting upon this notion, Petrov/Wright says:

> . . . This is the central concept of his philosophy. Wang Pi sees in it the fundamental law of the universe, and substantial character; it directs the world and its motion. It is all-pervading and all-embracing. Classifying all things, it manifests itself in the multiplicity of individual things and events and ties them into a single, ordered system . . .[5]

This can be seen in the following passage from Wang's LaoTzu Chu:

> The ten thousand things have ten thousand different forms but in the final analysis they are one. How did they become one? Because of non-being . . . Therefore in the production of the myriad things, I know its master. Although things exist in ten thousand different forms, their material forces are blended as one. The multitude have their own minds . . . But if the one is attained there will be kings and dukes as their masters. One is the master. How can it be abandoned?[6]

In this manner the One and the Many are contrasted in Wang Pi. This t'i-yung pattern is exemplified further in Wang's commentary to I Ching, hexagram 24, Fu ("Return"):

> Fu signifies a reversion to the original state - a state constituting the mind of Heaven and Earth. The cessation of activity always means quiescence, but this quiescence is not something opposed to activity. The cessation of speech means silence, but thus silence is not something opposed to speech. Thus, though Heaven and Earth are endowed with the myriad things . . . yet it is the silent and supreme non-being (wu) that is their origin. Therefore, it is with the cessation of activity within the Earth that the mind (or center) of Heaven and Earth becomes visible . . . .[7]

Fung/Bodde comments on this passage:

> . . . the cause of all transformation or activity must itself be unchanging and quiescent. Such quiescence, however, is not a something standing on the same level with activity and opposed to it; it is simply the root from which activity springs . . .[8]

1. Pen-t'i ("original substance")

T'ang/Liebenthal:

> . . . The Original Substance is the Dynamic Order or things, in which the manifold is contained and in which it originates, but which is itself substanceless and above appearance. The Original Substance is at the beginning and end of all single events and things . . . the undifferentiated Perfect Whole. Things move about but Substance is the ruling principle which determines their motion . . . All changes are given their laws by Order, which is ultimate, and everything has its definite task and place (fen wei) in it, because it represents an application of the Original Substance . . .[9]

2. Tao/Wu

Wang Pi:

> . . . Tao signifies no-thing (wu). Nothing that is not contained in it, nothing that does not come from it. Then what is Tao? It is the neutral, unsubstantiated, unfathomable . . .

B. The Many

The universe is a multiplicity without chaos. As

T'ang/Liebenthal stat:

> . . . Things are manifold and constantly changing, but there is a system behind their changes. This systematic order is very strict, and things, though changing

> cannot go astray. Its rule is according to a law, so in spite of its manifoldness, there is no disorder.[10]

1. <u>Yin/Yang</u>

Petrov/Wright:

> With Wang Pi, <u>Yin</u> and <u>Yang</u> are transformed from simple forces acting in nature into general principles of activity. Interaction of these principles is the source of motion and change. That source is in nature itself, but at the same time these principles are themselves opposite forms of the manifestation of the One, which has a metaphysical, supernatural character . . .[11]

2. <u>Te</u>

Petrov/Wright:

> Wang Pi characterizes <u>Te</u> as the external aspect of Tao, as the form of its existence in the world, and, in part, in man. Since it nurtures the things produced by Tao it is in indissoluble connection with it . . .[12]

Thus, <u>tao/te</u> is parallel to the pair Original Substance/ Dynamic Order with one qualification. Whereas the Dynamic Order lies in the background, structuring the transformation of phenomena, <u>te</u> is in the foreground of the transformations, being immanent and manifest in each and every phenomenon (while maintaining contact with the transcendent, as does Order).

3. <u>Li</u>

Wang Pi:

> That things are what they are is not willful. They must follow the principle (<u>li</u>) proper to them . . .[13]

The exact meaning of li is extremely difficult to ascertain, and is the subject of controversy in modern research.[14] It seems to apply to a specific phenomenon and is understood through human cognition synthesizing knowledge of the Dynamic Order that underlies the phenomenon and the te that is immanent within it. This knowledge is linked to the casting of an I Ching hexagram which orients the phenomenon in the universe, giving "situation" (shih) and "position" (wei). Suffice it to say that this notion of li is in touch with and involves both t'i and yung, and is in some way linked to Wang's epistemology.[15]

4. Epistemology

a. General Comment: Petrov/Wright:

> Man's knowledge of the surrounding world of activity is a complex process in many stages, from image-representations as the result of sensory perception, to the formation of concepts and logical categories. In his logical categories, Wang Pi is looking for the fundamental points of knowing which express the connections between phenomena, and for their general principles which embrace the general content of the outer world.[16]

b. The Inadequacy of Words and Symbols: Zürcher:

> . . . Time and again the fact is stressed that no words, names, or symbols are able to express "the silent and supreme non-being" which constitutes the "Mind of Heaven and Earth", for all these terms necessarily define, they "fix" or "associate" ("tie") the speaker's mind to particular objects, whereas the "Mystery" (hsüan), though provisorily denoted by words like "the Way", "non-being", or "great", is all-embracing and therefore undefineable . . . Words are an incomplete expression of an inner reality, an outer manifestation of a hidden source . . .[17]

5. Self-Cultivation / Wu-wei

T'ang/Liebenthal:

> . . . if you wish to arrive wither you are destined to go you must not stray from your source. If you do not want to stray from your source, your life must be no more than a manifestation of the whole of the Original Substance. If one wishes to fulfill the whole of one's destiny and be loyal to one's true nature one must become one with the Tao; that is its two aspects - substance (t'i) and application (yung) - must be intact . . .[18]

Self cultivation for Wang Pi involves a return to the root that is the Original Substance within one. This is to be found when activity ceases in complete stillness. As the sage reaches the source through wu-wei (no action) he experiences harmony with all things because he is identified with the undifferentiated origin inherent in them all. Wang says:

> The Sage understands Nature perfectly and knows clearly the conditions of all things. Therefore, he goes along with them and takes no unnatural action. He is in harmony with them but does not impose anything on them.[19]

6. tzu-jan

Although it is not really a central concern in Wang Pi it is interesting to examine his understanding of it given the importance it assumes in the system of Hsiang/Kuo. He discusses it only where he must - in his commentary on Lao Tzu, chapter 25, the Taoist locus classicus for this term.[20] In order to elucidate just how Wang fits this into his system, the commentary is here quoted in full:

> Man does not oppose Earth and therefore can comfort all things, for his standard is the Earth. Earth does oppose Heaven and therefore can sustain all things, for its standard is Heaven. Heaven does not oppose Tao, and therefore can cover all things, for its standard is Tao. Tao does not oppose Nature (tzu-jan) and therefore it attains its character of being. To follow Nature as its standard is to model after the square while within the square, and the circle while in the circle, and not to oppose Nature in any way. By Nature is meant something that cannot be labeled and something ultimate. To use knowledge is not as good as to have no knowledge. Body and soul are not as good as essence and form. Essence and form are not as good as the formless. That with modes is not as good as that without modes. Hence these model after one another. Because Tao obeys Nature, Heaven relies on it. Because Heaven models after Tao, Earth follows Heaven as its principle. Because Earth models after Heaven, man uses Earth as his form.[21]

It can clearly be seen in this passage that to Wang Pi, tzu-jan takes on a decided element of transcendence while maintaining a firm base within the phenomenal realm.

Thus we can see how the t'i-yung pattern interfuses the thought of Wang Pi. T'i and yung, although in one sense separate, are mutually dependent and interfused. The One must depend on the Many for its manifestation and self-evolution; the Many must depend on the One for its origin and for its regulation and order.

II. The Yung Motif

Due primarily to Wang Pi, the discussion of non-being gained ascendency in the circles of the cultured upper classes during a strife-torn third century in China.[22] The more

conservative adherants to state Confucianism, and the more materialistic adherants to the *ming-chiao* ("School of Names" or "Realists") reacted quite strongly against this popularity. The Confucian reaction can be seen in this brief excerpt from the "Treatise Exalting Existence" (*Ch'ung Yu Lun*) written by P'ei Wei (267-300). He remarks that his contemporaries "exalted the doctrine of esteeming nonexistence and established the theory of despising existence . . ."[23]. Furthermore:

> . . . These accomplished talkers do indeed enumerate the causes of existence and of emporocal reality with great profundity and they praise with emphatic favor the beauties of the Void (*k'ung*) and of Nothingness (*wu*). But the causes of physical reality can be proved, whereas the meaning of the Void and of Nothingness is difficult to examone. Their phrases of sophisticated subtlety may in fact be sheer nonsense, and their plausible analogies may lead to error. The crowd is confused by what it hears, but is eager to adopt ready-made opinions . . .[24]

Not much is known of the *ming-chiao* writings during this time, and this area certainly merits future attention. What little can be gleaned is done vicariously from the *Chuang Tzu* commentary of Hsiang/Kuo. Rather than blame the tumultuous social disintegration of this period on the partisans of non-being, their philosophy represents, as Zürcher says, an "attempt at reconciliation" of both the being and non-being modes. In fact, as we shall see, it comes down much more forcefully on the former side than on the latter. As a consequence, we have characterized this section with the phrase "the *yung* motif".[25]

A. *Tzu-jan*

The cornerstone of the philosophy of Hsiang/Kuo is their conception of the nature of reality. The primary notion in this conception is *tzu-jan*.[26] The point of departure for this idea is an emphatic rejection of any noumenal force that underlies, precedes, and the origin of the phenomenal. It is a rejection of the *t'i* that underlies the *yung*:

> . . . In existence, what is prior to things? We say that *yin* and *yang* are prior to things. But *yin* and *yang* are themselves things. What, then, is prior to the *yin* and *yang*? We may say that nature (*tzu-jan*) is prior to them. But nature is simply the naturalness of things. Or we may say that the supreme Tao is prior to things. But this supreme Tao is supreme non-being. Since it is non-being, how can it be prior? Thus what can it be that is prior to things? And yet things are continuously being produced. This shows that things are spontaneously what they are. There is nothing that causes them to be such.[27]

1. *Wu/Tao*

Fung/Bodde:

> . . . When we turn to the *Chuang Tzu Commentary* it becomes apparent that "non-being" is there interpreted as actually signifying a state of nothingness. In other words, it is equivalent to what we would today describe as a mathematical zero. Hence Tao, since it is 'non-being' cannot be regarded as the first cause or prime mover for things in the world of being. On the contrary, we are told that all things are the way they are simply because of an inherent natural tendency which causes them to be thus . . .[28]

This is exemplified in the following passage from the commentary:

> . . . Since non-being is non-being, it cannot produce being (yu). Yet before being itself has yet been produced, it cannot go on to produce (other things). What, then, produces things? They spontaneously produce themselves. . . . That everything is spontaneously what it is, is called natural. And to be natural means not to be made to be so. . . . Therefore everything produces itself and does not issue from anything else. This is the Way of Heaven.[29]

Thus, Fung/Bodde comments:

> . . . what we call the Way or Tao os somply a designation for the principle that everything produces itself and does not issue from anything else . . .[30]

2. Change (Pien)

Hsiang/Kuo as well as Wang Pi recognize a phenomenal universe that is in a constant state of flux:

> Of the forces which are imperceptible, none is greater than that of change. It transports Heaven and Earth toward the new. It carries hills and mountains to quit the old. The old never stops for a minute, but suddenly has already become the new. Thus, Heaven and Earth and all things are ever in a state of change. The world is ever renewed but regards itself as old . . .[31]

Whereas for Wang Pi, change is the product of a complex interaction between the pen-t'i-grounded "Dynamic Order" and the te of individual phenomena, for Hsiang/Kuo, change is the self-transformation of phenomena. Their system rejects a noumenal causative agent; yet it is also not at all explicit about whether or not these distinct phenomena are linked in a causal relationship. Fung/Bodde comment that their position on this is that ". . . we cannot postulate with assurance

that any one specific condition is the cause of any other specific condition . . ." [32]. Yet this interpretation is far more explicit than Hsiang/Kuo ever gets. Rather than develop a theory of a temporal causality (i.e. X precedes and causes Y) they emphasize instead what can best be described as a king of non-specific interdependence among phenomena that is grounded in the notion of *tzu-jan.* Thus, in the *Commentary* we read:

> There are no things under Heaven which do not hold a relationship to one another as of the 'self' to the 'other'. Yet both the 'self' and the 'other' equally desire to act for themselves, thus being as opposed to each other as are east and west. On the other hand the 'self' and the 'other' at the same time hold a relationship to one another as that of the lips and teeth. The lips and teeth never (deliberately) act for one another, yet 'when the lips are gone, the teeth feel cold'. Therefore the action of the 'other' on its own behalf at the same time plays a great function in helping the 'self'. Thus, though mutually opposed, they are at the same time mutually indispensible.[33]

In this manner Hsiang/Kuo walk a tightrope between isolated self-acting individual phenomena and a causally interrelated universe of myriad phenomena. As Fung/Bodde comments, ". . . The given condition of a certain individual depends on the given condition of the entire universe . . ." [34]. As such their theory is best characterized as non-specific, non-causal, phenomenal interdependency. In this notion it is possible to observe that their emphasis upon *tzu-jan* (things generate themselves) prevents them from theorizing

a temporal cuasality. This is most clearly exemplified in the following passage:

> . . . They (things) spontaneously produce themselves, that is all. By this is not meant that there is an 'I' to produce. The 'I' cannot produce things and things cannot produce the 'I'. The 'I' is self-existent. Because it is so by itself, we call it natural. . . .[35]

3. Fen

The question may arise at this point: without a noumenal Order structuring multiplicity how is it that the universe is not totally chaotic? Hsiang/Kuo answers: Each phenomenon has its own individual nature, its fen, that positions it properly in the world. Zürcher describes it this way:

> . . . The starting-point of Hsiang/Kuo is purely ming-chiao: it is the basic concept of fen, "share", "allotment". Every being has its own inborn 'share' of capacities, skills, inclinations, preferences, ideas, and desires which predestine him for a certain well-defined position in life, a certain environment, a certain task. No being is identical with any other, hence all fen are different . . .[36]

Thus fen can be described as the innate "so-ness" of distinct phenomena. Since ". . . All things function according to their nature . . ."[37], and ". . . Everything has its own nature and each nature its own ultimate . . ."[38], then tzu-jan is the activity of a phenomenon that conforms to its own natural alotment.

4. Li

Hsiang/Kuo's notion of li is intimately related to that of Fen. Li is present in each and every phenomenon: "Everything has its principle (li) and every affair has its proper condition."[38] Yet li in other passages seems to lie in the background behind phenomena, lending a structure to both their self-transforming activity and their natural interdependency and interrelatedness:

> A big thing comes about in a big situation, and a big situation necessarily comes about with a big thing. It is because of principle (li) that it is naturally so. We need not worry that this will fail. Why be anxious about it?[39]

Thus li seems to be a principle of coordinating the separate and distinct activities of each phenomenon that proceed from their acting according to their own individual fen (the tzu-jan activity):

> The principles of things are from the very start correct. None can escape them. Therefore a person is never born by mistake, and what he is born with (i.e. his fen) is never an error. Although heaven and earth are vast and the myriad things are many, the fact that I happen to be here is not something that . . . people of supreme strength or perfect knowledge can violate . . . Therefore if we realize that our nature and destiny are what they should be, we will have no anxiety and will be at ease with ourselves in the face of life or death, prominence or obscurity, or an infinite amount of changes and variations, and will be in accord with principle.[40]

In this idea of li as a principle that coordinates the activities of the myriad things while nonetheless remaining immanent within them, the roots can be seen of a notion that

Hsiang/Kuo have specifically negated. As we have seen, their notion of li involves an aspect that transcends individual phenomena; and it is in this, we maintain, that certain characteristics of the t'i that they have rejected begin to make an appearance. In point of fact, Demieville has arrived at similar conclusions:

> . . . il arrive encore à Kuo siang . . . d'employer parfois le mot li avec son vieux sens d'ordre rationnel des êtres sur le plan cosmique et naturaliste. Mais dans certains passages, le li porté à son degre 'supreme' tend à se definir comme un absolu ultramondain . . . La valeur naturaliste du mot li subsiste à l'arriere-plan de cette conception . . . mais la déviation dans le sens transcendental est indéniable. . . .[41]

Thus in an effort to bring order to their collection of isolated individuals, Hsiang/Kuo have inadvertently allowed a bit of transcendentalism to slip into their system. The li inherent in each fen finds its place in the universe. And phenomenal action that is according to fen is also li. In order to provide structure and order, li must transcend.

5. ming (destiny)

The concept of destiny is a corollary to the notions of li and fen:

> Everyone is in some situation, but not everyone knows that every situation is destined . . . We have our life not because we wish to have it . . . All aspects (of an individual's life) . . . are not so because we want them. By natural reason (t'ien-li) they are what they are . . .[42]

6. Epistemology

Hsiang/Kuo's theory of knowledge is also imbued with their ideas of tzu-jan. fen, and li:

> . . . the term 'knowledge' is born out of failure to hold what is suited to oneself. . . .[43]

> . . . only when one abandons the pursuit of knowledge and lets Nature take its own course, and changes with the times, can he be perfect.[44]

Knowledge is usually gained by acting contrary to one's fen; this knowledge is certainly decired. But if, for example, one's nature is that of a genius, then one's knowledge would be gained by acting in accord with one's fen; this knowledge is praised.[45] Hsiang/Kuo seem to avoid most of the important epistemological questions that were raised by Chuang-tzu.

7. Self-cultivation / wu-wei

The way of self-cultivation in this inherently self-activating, self-transforming, and self-regulating system is simply to act in accord with the fen and li within oneself. By "accepting what cannot be avoided", one takes no (unnatural) action and thus does not interfere with the cosmos and one's role within it.

> Non-activity (wu-wei) does not mean folding one's hands and remaining silent. It simply means allowing everything to follow what is natural to it, and then its nature will be satisfied . . .[46]

If this is followed, the entire society will be regulated:

> . . . when each limits himself to what he himself is capable, then natural principles operate of themselves and there is no assertive activity . . . Hence let everyone perform his own proper functions, so that high and low both have their proper places. This is the perfection of the principle of non-activity.[47]

In having no deliberate mind of his own, the sage dissolves his self and blends completely and mysteriously with the myriad things. In doing so, he roams in the transcendental realm:

> The true man unifies nature and man and equalizes all things . . . he is empty and is everything. He is unconscious and is everywhere. He thus mysteriously unifies his own self with its other.[48]

> . . . the perfect man responds to external things with no conscious mind but mysteriously coincides with reason (li). . . .[49]

> . . . Therefore principle has its ultimate and the transcendental and the mundane worlds are in silent harmony with each other. There has never been a person who has roamed over the transcendental world to the utmost and yet was not silently in harmony with the mundane world, nor has there been anyone who has been silently in harmony with the mundane world and yet did not roam over the transcendental world . . . The sage always roams in the transcendental world in order to enlarge the mundane world.[50]

Even though they attempt to link it with the mundane, Hsiang/Kuo, in their description of the experience of the Perfect Man, have once again presented a transcendental element. We suggest that this is due in part to the nature of the text upon which their commentary is based. It would indeed be quite difficult to write a wholly materialistic interpretation of the Chuang Tzu, a text written, at least in part, as a critique

of the "empirical" or realistic doctrines of the Sophists (ming-chiao) and the Mohist Canons.

Thus Hsiang/Kuo's commentary presents a counterbalance to the metaphysics of Wang Pi. In emphatically denying the dependency of the Many on the One, it presents a model of a phenomenal world of isolated yet interconnected self-activating units in which the highest virtue lies in allowing the inherently balanced system to function on its own.

CHAPTER 2: SOME ESSENTIAL IDEAS OF THE INDIAN PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ

I. NATURE AND INTENT

Although there is disagreement as to the intent and nature of these texts, there is general accord among modern Western scholars that the Prajñāpāramitā sutras are not primarily philosophical. As Conze states:

> It would be a mistake to regard these texts as philosophical treatises in the European sense of the word. To begin with, they do not develop their doctrine by reasoned argumentation but rely entirely on simple dogmatic affirmation . . . Second, it is not the purpose of the texts to expound some novel view about the constitution of reality or the nature of the universe . . .[1]

Conze proceeds to say that the PP are religious texts composed ". . . to further religious emancipation or salvation . . ."[2] Suzuki concurs. In the Prajñāpāramitā, he says, ". . . There are no metaphysical questions which are not at the same time questions of salvation and enlightenment."[3] To him, however, these texts are not solely religious; they are at the same time religion and philosophy, psychology and ontology. At another point Suzuki states that: "The object of the discourse (in the PP sutras) is to exhort and extol the practice of Prajñā,"[4] thus emphasizing the religious/psychological/soteriological nature of the texts.

Obermiller can be seen to emphasize the religious and soteriological interpretation although approaching it from a slightly different

point of view. To him the main concern of the PP corpus is the description of the path of the Bodhisattva. This must be qualified by the understanding that Obermiller's comments emerge from amidst his intensive study of texts that were written as commentarial literature upon the earlier basic PP sutras. The Abhisamaya-alaṅkarā is a commentary upon the Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā reorganizing the material into a description of the progressive stages upon the Bodhisattva Marga which it regards as the "hidden meaning" of the PP sutras.[5]

Another interpretation of the intent of these texts is that they are in some way a communication of a particular religious experience. Thus, Conze says, "The ontology of the Prajñāpāramitā is a description of the world as it appears to those whose self is extinct."[6]

Suzuki maintains a similar position: ". . . When the Prajñāpāramitā says that all is Maya it simply describes what it sees Yāthabhūtam in this sense world."[7]

These observations about the non-philosophical nature of the PP texts can be viewed in examining passages such as this in the Aṣṭa in which philosophical observation is decried:

> . . . He courses in a sign when he courses . . . in the idea that 'form is empty', or 'I course', or "I am a Bodhisattva" . . . or when it occurs to him 'he who courses thus, courses in perfect wisdom and develops it' . . . Such a bodhisattva should be known as unskilled in means.[8]

II. CONCEPTIONS OF "REALITY"

Despite the observation that the nature and intent of the Prajñā sutras is not primarily philosophical, there is reflected within them conceptions about the nature of mundane and supramundane "reality" and the relationship of human understanding to these.

A. Buddhist Background

Early Buddhism denied the final objective reality of the various objects and mental states of the phenomenal world, maintaining that these could be analysed into skandhic components that were themselves devoid of self, or soul, anātman. The subsequent Abhidharmist scholastic movement, claiming scriptural authority, centered upon the notion of dharma in developing laborious elaborations and specifications of the earlier doctrine. To them the phenomenal world was composed of minute entities (dharmas) (various in number from sect to sect)[9] enmeshed in suffering (duḥkha) and being so impermanent (anitya) as to arise, exist, and perish in a fraction of an instant. Human mental functioning and interaction with the phenomenal world was likewise analysed into dharmic elements; and the description of reality in the classifications of skandhas, āyatanas, and dhātus proceeded from a subjective viewpoint. (That is to say it recognized the mediation of cognition in the apprehension of the objective world to the extent that this apprehension served as an integral part of the description of this world. By contrast, western science pretends to a purely "objective" description of the phenomenal world.) Each dharma, though extremely subtle and minute, was said to have its own mark (lakṣaṇa)[10]

and its own immutable and self generating essence (svabhāva). In this system the dharma-svabhava was the final ultimate, essential unit, the ontological building block of objective and subjective phenomena.

B. The Innovations of the PP

One of the major innovations of the PP texts is the denial and negation of the ultimate reality of these dharmas. Dharmas are nihsvabhāva, devoid of own-being; they are śūnya, empty, unproduced, unoriginated, devoid of mark and any identifying characteristic. In fact their view of the phenomenal world is that it is completely bereft of any substance whatsoever, whether it be ātman or dharmasvabhāva. The fundamental basis of the mundane in both its objective and subjective aspects is śūnyāta, emptiness. Says Obermiller:

> . . . the elements of existence . . . directly intuited not merely devoid of a relation to Ego, being at the same time real in their plurality, and not merely in their objective unreality as elements of the external world, but as having themselves no real essence of their own, as mutually dependent, i.e. relative, and as forming from the standpoint of Ultimate Reality, one motionless whole.[11]

To Suzuki, one significance of this Mahayana innovation is to extend the Hinayana doctrine of anātman from subjective application to objective application.[12] Robinson, observing that ātman and svabhāva are "nearly synonomous", maintains that the Śūnyāvāda innovation lies not in this reformation but rather in the "valuetone" of the word "empty", which, rather than stressing aversion to worldly life as in Early Buddhism, ". . . summons the hearer to

re-evaluate transmigration and achieve release within it rather than fleeing it while still considering it real and important . . ."[13] thus enabling the hearer to more readily see things yāthabhūtam, as they really are.

Warder seems to elaborate upon Suzuki's position:

> What is entirely new is that 'phenomena,' the elements of (dharma), are spoken of in exactly the same terms as 'beings'. The old distinctions between every day appearance and philosophical reality has been obliterated and something new is being put in its place. The stream of consciousness, the sequence of conditions, is apparently no more real than the soul or person, or if it is anything (the soul being nothing at all) it is only a puppet show, not the phenomena mentioned in the Tripitaka but some more ultimate substance.[14]

C. The Doctrine of Śūnyatā

The implications of this doctrine of śūnyatā are quite far reaching. Every single element of human experience is completely devoid of any ontological validity. The existence of a phenomenal world and its constituent dharmas is a mere thought construction (kalpa) based upon false discrimination (vikalpa).[15]

C. 1. The Empirical World

One understanding of this doctrine approaches emptiness from the illusory empirical. The world is a morass of incessant causative (karmic) flux from out of which human conceptual activity imputes (to use Obermiller's felicitous word) the so-called solid objects and definitive experiences of its phenomenal world. Pratītya-samutpāda, dependent co-origination, an important aspect of Early Buddhist world view is operative within the Prajñā model of the empirical, which however, clearly insists that it too is śūnya. Phenomena and dharmas

exist mutually related as a result of causes and conditions and as such are defined as empty.[16] Yet Suzuki is fast to point out that the relativity of dharmas and śūnyatā cannot be equated:

> . . . it is one thing to say that things are relative, but quite another to say that they are empty. Emptiness is the result of an intuition and not the outcome of reasoning . . . The idea of emptiness grows out of experience and in order to give it a logical foundation the premise is found in relativity . . .[17]
> . . . Things of this world are relative because of their being empty by nature and not conversely . . .[18]

The emptiness and illusoriness of the phenomenal world does not mean that the beings that impute its existence are not subject to its laws. As Suzuki says: ". . . Even when all is Māyā there are laws in it, and nothing in it can escape them; all must conform to them.".[19] The empirical realm is thus granted a kind of relative, limited reality, an experiential validity to all those beings enmeshed within it. Robinson states:

> The aim [of emptiness] is not to deny commonsense reality to things as experienced in the commonsense world, but to cleanse one's vision of false views, and so see the world 'as it really is', that is, to see its suchness.[20]

Furthermore despite the assertion that the phenomenal world of skandhas etc. to dharmas is empty in self nature and vivikta (isolated, having no relations to other dharmas; non-interacting and hence non-produced[21]), this sphere is vital and necessary if one is to ever experience the Prajñāparamitā:

> The Perfection of Understanding cannot be specified or heard or observed . . . according to the groups, elements and spheres. Why? Because of the separation (vivikta of all phenomena . . . Also the perfection of understanding cannot be recognized (or understood, ava-budh) apart from the groups, elements, and spheres. Why? Because

> it is precisely the groups, elements and spheres which are empty, separated, and calmed (santa). Because of this the perfection of understanding and the groups, elements and spheres are not a duality, not making a twofold . . .[22]

This is metaphorically restated in the later Vimalakirti-Nirdesa when Manjusri explains that the thought of enlightenment can occur only in transmigration, as lotuses grow only in the mud.[23]

C. 2. Epistemology: Cognition (vikalpa) and the Empirical

Duality and discrimination are significantly key elements in what could be deemed "epistemology" in the PP. As we have seen any difference between an objective external world and a subjectively apprehended external world is as illusory as this world itself. Human cognitive activity (vikalpa) is clearly the force that differentiates the empirical from the complete voidness. And, of course, this cognition is based upon the imputation of duality. This has led Conze to declare: "The assumption of any kind of duality is considered as the basic error of human thinking".[24] Furthermore, Suzuki says:

> . . . The human intellect oscillates between opposites, when the idea of a beginning is exploded, the idea of beginninglessness replaces it, while in truth these are merely relative. The great truth of Śūnyāta must be above those opposites, and yet not outside them. . . .[25]

Emptiness is the essential nature and source of dharmas and as such is never apart from dharmas yet never contained in them either. Emptiness is nondiscriminated and nondual; when dharmas are seen yāthabhūtam as mere thought-construction (Kalpa) reified from voidness, it is said that they have never been produced, never come into existence, never arisen or ceased, and are completely bereft of

qualities and marks.[26] All this proceeds from the non-dual nature of emptiness. Robinson states:

> The teaching of emptiness repudiates dualities: between the conditioned and the unconditioned, between subject and object, between the pure and impure, between the relative and absolute . . .[27]

This clearly reiterates the denial of the ultimate reality of the empirical realm and furthermore emphasizes the role of cognitive functioning in its generation. Suzuki in describing the experience of *śūnyatā* focuses upon this role:

> In order to get into the world of Emptiness, existence itself must be made to turn a somersault. One must once experience sitting at the center of existence and viewing things from this hub . . . .[28]

However there is more to emptiness than the denial of ontological validity to phenomena and dharmas.

C. 2. a. The Role of Language (*Vyavahāra*)

Robinson approaches these problems from a somewhat different angle strongly emphasizing the linguistic aspect of the relationship between cognition and the empirical. He understands emptiness as dependent co-arising and depicts an essenceless substratum of constant flux underlying the phenomena, which are in his understanding, the products of a cognition itself enmeshed within its own dualistic and essence-imbued linguistic system. He compares the Mahayana world view to that of modern physics in which the common "reality" is in fact totally devoid of any material content, composed, instead, of vast waves of energy.

> One of the chief obstacles for modern people trying to understand sunyata is that science discarded the substance-and-attribute mode of explanation centuries ago; and, thanks to popular science, we are all sunyavadins nowadays in our serious metaphysics, while often remaining naive svabhavavadins in our theology and self image.[29]

Now when the Sunyavadin attempts to communicate his doctrine he encounters this difficulty; he has a world view in which there are no essences but a language in which every item implies an essence.[30] This is Robinson's explanation for the occurence throughout the PP literature of passages in which one thing is asserted in one sentence and then denied in the next. For example in the _Aṣṭa_ we read: Chapter 15: "Deep certainly is this dharma which I have fully known, Nothing has been or will be, or is being fully known, and that is the depth of this dharma". . .[31] And perhaps the most highly developed formulation of this type of paradox is to be found in the _Vajracchedika Prajñāpāramitā_: ". . . just that which the Tathagatha has taught as the wisdom which has gone beyond, just that He taught as not gone beyond. Therefore it is called 'Wisdom which has gone beyond'."[32]

C. 3. _Saṃvṛti/Paramārtha_

In order to further elucidate these apparent paradoxes Robinson resorts to the distinction between absolute truth and conventional or "expressional" truth. The former is communication from the standpoint of _śūnyatā_, the latter is communication from the standpoint of the empirical (_saṃsāra_).

> The contrast between the two truths (conventional and absolute) is the basic principle of the Prajñā-pāramitā sutras, and all their apparent paradoxes merely insist that what is true from one standpoint is false from the other. This epistemological dualism is the price that Sunyavada pays for ontological nondualism.[33]

Warder also provides another version of the two levels of truth, making his distinctions between "ultimate" and "concealing".[34]

C. 3. a. Is Śūnyatā an "Absolute"?

Certain interpreters have emphasized the absolute level in their explanations of Śūnyatā. For example, Conze, commenting on dharma-nihsvabhāva states: "In a sense one can speak of a 'monism", since all multiplicity is relegated to a lower plane and denied ultimate validity."[35] Warder in a passage cited above characterizes śūnyatā as "some more ultimate substance".[36] Obermiller maintains that śūnyatā is a ". . . unique undifferentiated Absolute as representing the true essential nature . . .[37] Elsewhere he states that the main philosophical view in the Sunyavada is one of the "strictest monism" and goes to the point of claiming that:

> . . . Monism is one of the greatest productions of Indian thought. Early Buddhism with its pluralistic principles was unable to hold stand against it, and the origination of the Mahayana, of the Prajñāpāramitā and the Madhyamika system we have to ascribe exclusively to the influence of the old monistic teachings of the Upanisads. We have undeniable reasons to affirm that the Prajñāpāramitā and the exegesis founded upon it is a link between the Upanisads and their later development in the Vedanta.[38]

Although Suzuki is far less direct in presenting śūnyatā as an Absolute Monistic principle his emphasis upon the positive aspect of emptiness tends to point in this direction:

> Emptiness is that which makes the work of causation possible, it is a form of canvas on which causation paints its most variegated pictures. Emptiness thus comes first though not in time, for time presupposes a chain of causation; the coming first means being fundamental . . .[39]

Robinson refuses to grant *śūnyatā* ontological status. Working from his distinction between absolute and conventional, or "expressional" truth, he states that emptiness characterizes every item in the system of expressional truths.[40] This system is the linguistic counterpart of the false cognition of an empirical world replete with duality. Within this system emptiness holds sway as the symbol of non-system. However, since there are "no *intrinsic* links between experience and linguistic expression", the "symbol system" or "expressional system", as products of this latter, are arbitrary syntheses devoid of an experiential basis. Thus "emptiness" or any other term for Absolute truth being part of the "descriptive order" not part of the "factual order", is like all other expressions, empty. It is merely a word, without substance or basis in experiential fact. From this viewpoint Robinson lashes out at those who characterize emptiness as some ontological Absolute:

> Emptiness is not a term outside the expressional system, but it is simply the key term within it. Those who would hypostatize emptiness are confusing the symbol system with the fact system. No metaphysical fact whatever can be established from the facts of language. . .[41]

Unfortunately Robinson remains unclear on the explicit relationship between language and cognition and hence unclear about the role of language in the shaping of experience. Does language structure

reality or is it simply the reasoned by-product of the cognition that does? Or is the distinction between language and cognition, between vyavahāra and vikalpa not a valid one from the PP standpoint?

Furthermore Robinson's emphasis upon placing śūnyatā in the "descriptive order", in "expressional truth" as found in his earlier writings, leaves the distinct impression that emptiness as well as the other terms that express "Absolute truth" are valid solely as conventional designations; this implies that they are arbitrary, without basis in experience. This is basically Wayman's criticism of him.[42]

His criticism of "those who would hypostatize emptiness" is that they take what is solely a descriptive device and reify it into a "metaphysical fact". Wayman censures Robinson for ignoring the experiential basis of "voidness":

> . . . The 'Meeting of Father and Son' Sutra (Pitāputra-samāgama) states that both conventional and absolute are realized as void; but voidness as a designation can only be applied conventionally, since paramārtha transcends all conventional language. The Sutra speaks of realizing the absolute; its voidness is not by reason of the word 'voidness'. Robinson's passage is sheer jargon . . .[42a]

In his later writings Robinson introduces this experiential element while maintaining his critique of the "Absolutists":

> . . . It (śūnyatā) cannot be called monism, because it denies that reality is either a plurality or a unity; it is simply beyond individuation and numbers, both of which are futive concepts and mere designations. What, then, is reality? It is called the Dharma-realm, Dharma-nature, the Dharma-body, the acme of the real, Suchness (tāthatā), and the highest reality or absolute (paramārtha). But it is saṃsāra ("transmigration") seen as it really is by the vision of saints--non-different from nirvana.[43]

Thus, while we can approach *śūnyatā* from the empirical/linguistic realm and explain its role in this conventional level, when we attempt to derive a more satisfactory understanding of just what this emptiness that underlies the phenomenal really is, we are greeted by such reason-stopping words as "thusness" (*tāthatā*), reality-limit (*bhūtakoṭi*) etc., and we then are left acceding to the existence of the experience that is symbolized in conventional language by these words and others. In fact, this is what occurs in Suzuki's argument cited above concerning the dissimilarity between relativity and *śūnyatā*,[44] in which he refers back to the intuitive experience of emptiness. This experience is also called *Prajñā*:

> . . . The Prajna is seeing into the essence of things as they really are (*yathābhutām*); that the Prajna is seeing things as in their nature empty; that thus seeing things is to reach the limit of reality, i.e. to pass beyond the realm of human understanding; that therefore, Prajna is grasping the ungraspable, attaining the unattainable, comprehending the incomprehensible; that when this intellectual description of the workings of Prajna is translated into psychological terms it is not becoming attached to anything whether it is an idea or a feeling.[45]

C. 3. b. Critical Comment

However much it may be helpful in the apparent understanding of the paradoxes of the texts, Robinson's distinction between absolute and conventional truth and Warder's between ultimate and concealment levels are clearly devices imported into the texts--they are not present within it (although they can be justified by a certain reading of the texts). Furthermore, Robinson's more basic distinction

the descriptive and factual orders, while it may provide an explanation of why paramārtha satya is declared to be void, is misleading in its implication that there is some kind of factual order in the texts when the texts repeatedly tell us that there are no facts whatsoever -- not even the Buddha or śūnyatā. Robinson's comments about the role of śūnyatā within the linguistic system (vyavahāra) must be extended to the so-called factual system, which, in these sutras is vikalpa--imputed through cognition. Voidness is not merely a word-- it is the essential nature of every single element of human experience from the experience of apprehending an objective world to the very experience of the voidness of that world. This is precisely Wayman's critique. What Robinson has done in effect is to confuse his descriptive order with the factual order of the text. When Suzuki talks of becoming non-attached to anything it is not because "attachment" and "thing" are mere words with no basis in fact/experience, but rather because the fact/experience of "attachment" and "thing" are themselves totally void and without substance. Or in other words, there is nothing to be attached to and no one to be attached.

III. THE AFFECTIVE CORRELATES OF VIKALPA AND ŚŪNYATĀ

This can be explicated further by investigating another significant aspect of the PP sutras, the unique understanding and description of the psychological attitudes associated with the cognitive imputation of the empirical world and with the dissolution of this imputation in the experience of śūnyatā. For example, when common people

impute reality to dharmas they become involved in "settling down". The Lord Buddha, commenting on these dharmas says:

> As they do not exist, so they exist. And so, since they do not exist (*avidyāmāna*), they are called (the result of) ignorance (*avidyā*). Foolish, untaught common people have settled down in them. Although they do not exist, they have constructed all the dharmas. Having constructed them, attached to the two extremes, they do not know or see those dharmas (in their true reality).[46] So they construct all dharmas which yet do not exist. Having constructed them they settle down in the two extremes. They then depend on that link as a basic fact, and construct past, present, and future dharmas. After they have constructed, they settle down in name and form. They have constructed all dharmas which yet do not exist. But while they construct all dharmas which yet do not exist, they neither know nor see the path which is that which truly is. In consequence they do not go forth from the triple world, and do not wake up to the reality limit. For that reason, they become styled 'fools'. . . .[47]

From this passage one begins to get some idea of the tremendous emotional investment that is made in the reification of a false world from nothing whatsoever; and one concommitantly begins to get some idea of the emotional attitude engendered when *śūnyatā* cuts away at this reification. The dharmas that are constructed as described in the passage also serve as "objective supports" (*ālambana*) for thinking, action, and volition:

> . . . The Tathagata is one who has forsaken all reflections and discriminations. Space on its own cannot raise a deed or a thought without the help of objective support. A deed can arise only with an objective support, not without one. A thought can arise only with an objective support, not without one. Intellectual acts must refer to dharmas which are seen, heard, felt, or known . . . An act of will is raised only with an objective support, and not without, in the sense that one treats an actually non-existent objective support as a sign, as an objective support.

> In fact, also the act of will is isolated, and also the sign . . . The act of will is isolated from the sign (which seems to cause it), and it arises only in reference to the conventional expressions current in the world.[48]

Once again one can see how the doctrine of emptiness undermines the fragile system constructed above voidness as a network of objective supports. And furthermore one can see why the highly unsubstantial ego clings so tenaciously to its perceptual props, the ālambanas, like the man clinging to the tree limb by his teeth in the famous story from the Mumonkan.[49] It is not surprising that the PP texts are continually concerned about being too frightening. The impact of śūnyatā and this latter concern are shown in the following passage in which Subhuti responds to Sariputra's advocating that all the dharmas which constitute a Bodhisattva should train in the perfection of wisdom:

> I who do not find anything to correspond to the word 'Bodhisattva', or to the words 'perfect wisdom'-- which Bodhisattva should I then instruct and admonish in which perfect wisdom? It would surely be regrettable if I, unable to find the thing itself, should merely in words cause a Bodhisattva to arise and to pass away. Moreover, what is thus designated is not fixed anywhere, or not fixed, not unfixed, or not unfixed. And why? Because it does not exist . . . A Bodhisattva who does not become afraid when this deep and perfect wisdom is being taught, should be recognized as not lacking in perfect wisdom, as standing at the irreversible stage of a Bodhisattva, standing firmly, in consequence of not taking his stand anywhere. . . .[50]

The Bodhisattva in coursing in perfect wisdom is thus able to continue to function in the midst of illusion without standing upon or settling down in, any objective support. Hence his standing is

really no standing, his thought is unsupported, and he involves himself in the "non-appropriation of all dharmas."[51] Suzuki provides an interesting interpretation of the experience:

> . . . All must be set aside. Emptiness must stand shorn of all its trappings when its true features will strike us with their primeval awfulness. Primeval awfulness I say because Emptiness itself is now vanished; it is as if this physical body were left in mid-air, with nothing covering its head, nothing supporting its feet. It is awful to imagine such a situation. But the *Prajñāpāramitā* unmistakably contrives to create it for us. No wonder it gives us warnings constantly on this point.[52]

The PP texts contrive to create this situation by continually undermining any and all possible objective supports ranging from the dharmas of sense perception, to the more elusive dharmas of thought. For example: ". . . Because it cannot possibly come about is full enlightenment hard to win, because in reality it is not there, because it cannot be discriminated, because it has not been fabricated (as a false appearance)."[53]

A. The Role of Paradox

This provides another explanation of the occurence throughout the PP texts of paradox, which has already been explained above by Robinson and Warder as communications from the absolute/conventional (or ultimate/concealment) levels of truth. Paradox is used as a device to provoke the listener (or reader) into a completely different modality of experience. It is used to destroy any possible point of attachment, including significantly, the very point that is emptiness. Suzuki, commenting upon the "emptiness of emptiness" says:

> . . . The room is swept clean by the aid of a broom; but when the broom is retained it is not absolute emptiness. Nay, the broom, together with the sweeper, ought to be thrown aside in order to reach the idea of Atyanta-Sunyata. As long as their is even one dharma left, a thing or a person or a thought, there is a point of attachment from which a world of pluralities, and, therefore, of woes and sorrows, can be fabricated. Emptiness beyond every possible qualification, beyond an infinite chain of dependence--this is Nirvana.[54]

As Suzuki says, it is ". . . out of this great negation there is the awakening of the Prajñā and the great affirmation takes place . . . . The world is revealed as thoroughly pure, detached, unattainable, free from ego thought, and therefore the home of peace and happiness. . . ."[55]

Thus through our investigation of "affective" aspect of <u>śūnyatā</u> we have come to reaffirm the understanding of the nature and intent of the texts that we began with. When we come to see the PP sutras' model of how humans erect/impute an intricate and fragile scaffolding of objective supports and come to settle down within it, standing on it, taking it to be objectively real when in actuality it is completely vacuous, then we can understand that quite a significant aspect of the intent and nature of the text is to undermine this structure. As Suzuki says, the texts try to produce this experience in us--and certainly one aspect of the use of paradox is to do just this. When assertion is followed by denial the intent is to keep us from standing upon either, or from using either as objective support.

This understanding of the use of paradox without resorting to the absolute/conventional pattern also seems to make more intelligible the repeated warnings about being frightened away. If the texts were dealing with an Absolute truth, really existent, then the listener

could have this in turn to fall back on when all else has fallen away. This is not nearly as frightening a prospect as that which presents itself when even this Absolute truth has been negated. In order to experience śūnyatā-śūnyatā one must abandon oneself totally to absolutely nothing so that no point of attachment remains. Conze says:

> What one had to do was not to rely on anything, worldly or otherwise, to let it all go, to give the resulting emptiness a full run, unobstructed by anything whatsoever or by the fight against it . . . .[56]

It is only with this complete negation that, as Suzuki says, the "great affirmation" can occur. And it is in this sense that we can understand the well known Zen comment:

> When I began to study Zen, mountains were mountains;
> when I thought I understood Zen, mountains were not mountains;
> but when I came to full knowledge of Zen, mountains were again mountains.[57]

IV. SUMMARY

We can summarize from our discussion certain of the fundamental concepts of the Prajñāpāramitā that bear directly upon the core problem area that we have delineated:

1. svabhāva śūnyatā: Phenomena and dharmas do not exist of themselves - they are interrelated through causal processes (pratītya samutpāda). They are relative, contingent, dependent, and hence devoid of self-nature.

2. śūnyatā śūnyatā: The voidness of all is itself void. Hence sunyata is not an ontological Absolute.

3. śūnyatā is an experience, "vision", or "intuition" which involves the experiencing of the voidness of the experience itself.

4. The empirical world of phenomena and dharmas is merely thought-construction (kalpa). It is falsely discriminated as a result of human cognitive functioning (vikalpa). It is a "magical illusion", ignorantly imputed, reified out of voidness.

5. Despite the notion that the empirical world is void, all who experience it are subject to its laws. Hence it is granted a non-ontological, relative validity.

a. The empirical world is useful: it must be experienced before its voidness can be experienced.

6. Human cognitive functioning and hence also the empirical world is imbued with duality. Śūnyatā is non-dual. Hence it does not connote annihilation.

7. The cognitive imputation and false discrimination of the empirical world involves erecting a fragile system of ālambana, "objective supports", perceptual and conceptual props that humans "settle down" and depend upon, failing through avidyā, "ignorance", to realize the voidness of all, failing to see things yathābhutām, "as they really are".

8. The basic nature and intent of the PP is soteriological.

9. Paradox is used throughout the texts.

a. One way to explain the paradoxes is that they involve two conflicting statements, one from the standpoint of saṃvṛti satya, relatively valid empirical truth, the other from the standpoint of paramārtha satya, "absolute truth". These two levels are not explicitly stated in the texts but can be justified by a certain reading of them.

b. Another way to explain paradox is that it is an attempt to provoke the reader into a radical altering of his normal and false cognitive categories. This accords with the central soteriological intent of the PP.

10. The experience of *śūnyatā śūnyatā* involves a complete and total abandonment of all conceptual and perceptual categories, including oneself.

It is these central ideas that must be kept in mind when reading Chih Tun. An accurate comprehension of the PP should involve at least some, if not most, of these basic notions.

CHAPTER 3: CHIH TUN AND THE *CHI-SE* THEORY

I. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The life of Chih Tun reflects the unique tension between the innate Chinese tradition and the rapidly spreading foreign faith of Buddhism during the fourth century in China. Born to a family ". . . that had been Buddhist for generations . . ."[1], he was nonetheless educated in the secular literature, particularly that of Taoism and *Hsüan Hsüeh*. Although ordained as a monk at the age of twenty-four, after study of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, he engaged so successfully in the *ch'ing-t'an* circles that he became the friend and teacher of a group of rather influential aristocrats and was renowned as a scholar and interpreter of the *Chuang Tzu*. The fact that throughout his life he moved back and forth between monastery and capital, between the secluded introversion of mountain retreat and the public extroversion of the *ch'ing-t'an* salon, parallels the tension between the Buddhist and Taoist elements in his philosophy. It further typifies the *Zeitgeist* of the gentry and aristocrats during this time. These people saw in the gnostic philosophy of the *Prajñāpāramitā* significant affinities with their own Dark Learning. However Chih Tun more specifically typifies only that subset of this group that was intrigued enough by this gnostic philosophy to want to participate in the other aspects of the Buddhist life.

One can easily surmise that his training in both areas enabled him to excel in the explication of Buddhist ideas to his cultured fellows. The Shih Shuo Hsin Yü records praise for Tao-lin's being able to do just this:

> The Buddhists (generally) have difficulty in explaining the meaning of the Three Vehicles. Chih Tao-lin analyzed them in such a way that the Three Vehicles became clearly distinguished. Those who were sitting below and listening (to his words) all said that they could explain it. When Chih (Tun) sat down below, and (the others) discussed the subject themselves, they could just reach two turns (to speak), but at the third turn they became confused (and could not go on). Although (Chih Tun's) disciples transmit his new exegesis, they have never grasped (its meaning).[2]

During his lifetime Chih Tun seems to have written a rather extensive series of commentaries, prefaces, poems, eulogies, and treatises. Zürcher has compiled a list of titles of his writings, taken principally from Lu Ch'eng's Fa Lun, written during the third quarter of the fifth century,[3] and from Hui-chiao's Kao Seng Chuan, written early in the sixth century.[4] As late as five centuries after his death we find a collection of his writings, the Chih Tun Chi, listed in the biographical section of both T'ang Shu as comprising ten chuan.[5] Unfortunately, only a tiny fraction of these writings are still extant. Some of the poems and eulogies can now be found in the Hung Ming Chi and Kuang Hung Ming Chi, and other assorted fragments can be found

in the Kao Seng Chuan, the Shih Shuo Hsin Yu (and its commentary), and in the Ch'u San Tsang Chi Chi. All existing fragments were collected and compiled during the eighteenth century by Yen K'o-chün in his Ch'uan Shang-ku San-tai Ch'in Han San-kuo Liu-ch'ao Wen.[6] Of these extant fragments, two that are complete have been translated in full into English. These are Chih Tun's Introduction to his "Eulogy on an Image of the Buddha Sakyamuni", and his "Preface to a Synoptic Extract of the Larger and Smaller versions (of the Prajñāpāramitā)" (Ta Hsiao P'in Tui Pi Yao Ch'ao Hsü). The former concerns itself with a story of the life of the Buddha and is more dogmatic than philosophical; the latter, however, is an excellent source for the study of Tao-lin's understanding of the Prajñāpāramitā philosophy.[7] There are also English translations of the whole or parts of various other important fragments.[8]

II. HSIAO YAO YU COMMENTARY

As we have mentioned above, Chih Tun was a renowned expert on the Chuang Tzu. His contemporary and sometime disciple, Sun Ch'o, in his Tao Hsien Lun, put him in the same class as Hsiang Hsiu in terms of ability.[9] According to his biography in the Kao Seng Chuan, while he was at the White Horse Monastery he became engaged in a debate over the meaning of the first chapter of the Chuang Tzu, the Hsiao Yao Yu ("Free and Easy Wandering"). His opponent maintained the popular opinion as found in the

Hsiang Ksiu/Kuo Hsiang commentary on the text that this leisurely wandering meant that everyone should simply follow his own nature. This _ch'ing-t'an_ interpretation focused upon the notion of _fen_, the natural allotment of capacities possessed by each individual. As long as each person lived in accord with these capacities he was free to do anything. The perfect society was one in which everyone did just this.[10]

It is recorded that Chih Tun objected to this:

> This is not true. The nature of (the tyrant) Chieh and (the robber) Chih was to destroy and harm, and if one regards following one's nature as the realization (of perfect freedom), then (their way of life) would consequently also be 'wandering at leisure'.[11]

Thereupon he withdrew and wrote a much admired commentary on this chapter. Unfortunately it has long since been lost. All that remains are a few phrases cited by the sixth century scholar Lu Te-ming in his _Chuang Tzu Yin I_, and a small passage quoted in the commentary to the _Shih Shuo Hsin Yü_.[12] While nothing of substance may be gained from the former, the latter is large enough to provide a basic idea of the commentary. We offer a full translation of this fragment:[13]

> The notion of 'free and easy'[14] clarifies the mind of the Perfect Man. Master Chuang established words to talk about the great Tao and relied upon the metaphor of the P'eng and the quail. The P'eng, winding his way along the carefree road of life does thereby abandon his form[15] outside of the Fundamental (_t'i_).[16] The quail, confined to (traveling) short

> distances[17], laughs at those who soar far off and has a heart that is filled with boastful egotism.
>
> The Perfect Man chariots upon the normality of the universe and soars on high. He floats inexhaustibly upon the (ever) flowing waves (of becoming). He generates things yet is not a thing among things. In ease, his non-self obtains.
>
> The mystery (of the Perfect Man) influences without acting, makes haste without hurrying;[18] thus untrammeled, he aimlessly drifts about without arriving anywhere. This is how to become 'free and easy'.
>
> If now one has desires and matches them to their own satisfaction, being satisfied by what (seems) satisfactory (to him), one will be happy and will have what seems to be the reality of heaven. This would resemble hunger (having but) one satisfaction, and thirst (having but) one slaking. How can it be that one forgets the autumn and winter sacrifices when the grain is cured and dried, and that one throws aside the goblet when all that remains of the wine is its lees?[19]
>
> If it were not for the highest satisfaction, how could there be (this) 'free and easy (wandering)'?

In this passage Chih Tun is highly critical of the Hsiang/Kuo interpretation of this chapter of Chuang Tzu, comparing it to being concerned with the mere satisfaction of desire. To him, their interpretation vulgarizes what is basically a description of complete transcendence in the original text and turns it into a justification for a kind of laissez-faire morality. As Zürcher says:

> . . . There can be little doubt that Hsiang Hsiu and Kuo Hsiang in their famous commentary have completely misunderstood or falsified the basic purport of this chapter . . .[20]

Demieville maintains that Chih Tun's interpretation is closer to the spirit of Chuang Tzu than is that of Kuo Hsiang.[21] The latter, he maintains, contains a strong element of Han

Confucian and ming-chiao doctrines.[22] He comments upon the significance of Tao-lin's critique as recognized by his contemporaries:

> . . . Elle parût d'un nouveauté étonnante, et beaucoup s'y rallièrent à ce que rapportent les biographes de Tche Touen, même parmi les lettrés confucianistes: un bouddhiste avait renoué le fil de l'authentique tradition du taoisme antique. Elle ne manqua pas de susciter les protestations de confucianistes bien pensants.[23]

To this point we have presented only the Taoist aspect of Chih Tun's interpretation. Zürcher maintains however that there is quite an important element of Buddhism involved:

> It is necessary to view Chih Tun's interpretation against the background of Buddhist thought. In the first place, Hsiang-Kuo's essentially non-moral conception of a society in which every member is justified to lead any kind of life, provided that his actions agree with his 'natural' talents and inclinations, obviously militates against the Buddhist picture of a universe dominated by moral law. Secondly, the rigid deterministic pattern of Hsiang-Kuo's philosophy according to which 'what we do not, we cannot do; what we do, we cannot but do' is irreconcilable with the Buddhist idea that the human personality is susceptible to improvement, and that saintliness, the state of mind of Chih Tun's 'Perfect Man' can be reached by means of a process of mental discipline, morality, and devotion.[24]

Thus, Demieville sees Chih Tun's Hsiao Yao Yu Lun as presenting a renovation of the authentic ancient Taoist tradition; and Zürcher sees it as a Buddhist critique of hsüan hsüeh morality and determinism. It is certainly possible that both these elements were intended. They certainly can both proceed from a criticism of Hsiang/Kuo. We have included this brief study of

Chih Tun's Hsiao Yao Yu Commentary not so much because it bears direct evidence of Chih Tun's comprehension of Buddhist doctrines as we have to present to the reader an example of the difficulties of interpreting the texts of this particular period. The interpretations of both Demieville and of Zürcher are adequately attested to by an examination of this commentary. But it is simply not possible to decide which is the "correct" one. Indeed, as Link has so accurately stated in a study of Chih Tun's contemporary, Tao-an: ". . . in the Buddho-Taoist texts of Tao-an's period one is never assured whether Chinese or Indic connotations prevail . . ."[25] And when we recall Robinson's remark that this literature was deliberately written to sound ". . . Taoist to the Taoist, Buddhist to those who understood, and aesthetically pleasing to everyone . . .", one can begin to get a more specific idea of the problems presented in the interpretation of any piece selected from the Buddho-Taoist writings.

III. CHI-SE TSUNG - THE SCHOOL OF "MATTER AS SUCH"

A. Sources

The one thing that Chih Tun seems most frequently cited for in the secondary literature is his founding of the second (or third, depending on the source) of the six houses (chia) or seven schools, tsung) that centered around a particular interpretation of the Prajñāpāramitā during the fourth century in China.[26] There are a number of extant Chinese sources that provide information upon these schools. These are:

1. Chao Lun Shu ("Commentary on the Treatise of Chao") by Yuan-k'ang (fl. 627-49). Yüan-k'ang in turn cites:
   a. Preface to the Chao Lun by Hui-ta (fl. 557-86).
   b. Hsü-fa Lun ("Continuation of Doctrinal Treatises") by Pao-ch'ang (fl. 502-56). This in turn draws upon:
      b1. Liu-chia Ch'i Tsung Lun ("Treatise on the Six schools and Seven Sects") by T'an-chi (fl. 420-79).
      b2. Shih Hsiang Liu-chia Lun ("Treatise on the Marks of Reality (and) the Six Schools") by Seng-ching.[27]
2. Chung Lun Shu (or Chung Kuan Lun Shu), ("Commentary on the Mādhyamika Sastra") by Chi-tsang (549-623).[28]
3. Chung Lun Shu Chi ("Subcommentary on the Mādhyamika Sastra") by Ancho (fl. 805).[29]
4. Chao Lun Shu ("Commentary on the Treatise of Chao") by Hui-ta. It is not known if this person is the same as the one who wrote the Preface to the Chao-lun that is cited by Yüan-k'ang, above, 1a.[30]

It will not be necessary to enter into a discussion of the

disagreements between the above sources about all of the schools or sects; but rather we intend to focus upon the handling of the chi-se theory.

B. The Doctrine from Kuan-nei

According to Yüan-k'ang (1), the chi-se theory represents the third school on the list of T'an-chi (1b1), a list that consists only of the names of seven schools.[31] Furthermore there is no school in the list of the doctrines of six schools as provided by Seng-ching (1b2) that appears to correspond to what is known from other sources about this particular school.[32] Chi-tsang's Chung Lun Shu (2) mentions two distinct but related theories under the h heading of chi-se. The first he attributes to a certain teacher from Kuan-nei whom he says is refuted by Seng Chao in his essay, Pu Chen K'ung Lun ("The Emptiness of the Unreal"). He states that this first theory was that se wu tzu hsing ("rupa has no self nature"); and that it went under the name of the chi-se k'ung ("the Voidness of rupa as such"). The main tenet of the second theory, which he attributes to Chih Tun and labels as the se shih k'ung ("rupa is Void") theory, is that pen hsing k'ung chi ("original nature is Void and Still").[33] He also maintains that this doctrine is in agreement with that of Tao-an. Fung/Bodde provide more information from Chi-tsang about the first of these doctrines:

> The second theory . . . is that of matter as such, in which, however, there are two groups. The first

is the theory of matter as such (developed by a teacher) from within the Pass (Kuan-nei). This says that matter as such is empty, that is, that (visible) matter lacks any (permanent) nature of its own. That is why it says that matter as such is empty, but not that the original nature underlying this matter is empty. This theory has been attacked by Seng-chao, who says that while it understands that (visible) matter is not matter of itself, it fails to accept (the further fact) that (all) matter (whether visible or invisible) is (actually) not matter.[34]

Ancho (3) provides some further material about this doctrine:

. . . Through the conglomeration of fine (i.e. visible) matter, coarse (visible) matter is formed. As regards emptiness, it is only the coarse matter which is empty and not the fine matter. From the point of view of fine matter, the coarse matter is not matter of itself. Thus, in the same way from the point of view of black color, when there is white color this white color is not color of itself. That is why when it is said that rupa as such is empty, this does not mean that all rupa is entirely non-existant. Thus matter which has determinant qualities must necessarily exist without being dependent on causation (for its manifestation). Similarly in the case of coarse matter: having determinant qualities, it would then necessarily be formed without causation from fine matter. This is the meaning of the theory that invisible (i.e. fine) matter is not empty.[35]

The notion that fine matter is no empty as a qualification of the *śūnyavāda* doctrine is most peculiar and certainly not part of the doctrine in India. If anything, it seems closer to the notion of *dharma* in such Sarvastivadin Abhidharmic works as the *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasubandhu. Indeed, Fung mentions that this theory resembles those of modern atomic physics, which in turn seems to have certain elements in common with Abhidharmic ontology.[36] In any case it is quite a peculiar theory, but one which, nonetheless could fit under the rubric of Chao's critique.

However, as might be expected, the doctrine is of questionable authenticity. No mention of it is found in any of the other sources.[37] Yüan-k'ang (1), and Hui-ta (1a) both attribute the notion that matter is devoid of self nature (_chi-se k'ung_) to Chih Tun and make no mention of a teacher from Kuan-nei or of the theory that Fung quotes from Ancho.[38] This is particularly significant because it is precisely this doctrine and not the _se shih k'ung_ ("_rupa_ is Void") that is refuted by Seng Chao. Chi-tsang (2) attributes the refuted doctrine to someone other than Chih Tun; yet both Hui-ta (1a) and Yüan-k'ang (1) maintain that it is Tao-lin who is refuted by Seng Chao. Furthermore T'ang quotes Ancho's (3) statement that it was Chih Tun who was refuted by Chao; and he further cites a work entitled the _Chao Lun Hsin Shu_ ("New Commentary on the _Chao Lun_") by Wen Ts'ai (1241-1302[39]) which maintains the same thing.[40] Additionally, a passage from the _wen hsüeh_ section of the _Shih Shuo Hsin Yü_, the _Miao Kuan Chang_, generally accepted to be a fragment of a much larger work that was part of the collected works of Chih Tun, shows itself to be quite concerned with the idea that the nature of matter does not exist in and of itself; in other words, with the first doctrine that only Chi-tsang attributes to the shadowy teacher from Kuan-nei.[41] Hence T'ang concludes that Chi-tsang was in error in attributing this doctrine to someone other than Chih Tun.[42]

Now it is of interest to examine why Chi-tsang did not

attribute the refuted doctrine to Chih Tun. Although the material is scanty, it is possible to piece together some suggestions. To begin with, in an early commentary on the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa written by Kumarajiva's student, Seng-chao's fellow, and an early member of the same San-lun School to which Chi-tsang belonged, Seng-jui, the hsing-k'ung ("Voidness of nature") theory is mentioned as that one among the six early interpretations of the Prajñāpāramitā that most nearly grasped the truth of the śūnyavāda doctrine before the advent of Kumarajiva. According to Link, all sources associate Tao-an's name with this theory.[43] Now, T'ang suggests that there was an early tradition that praised both Tao-an and Chih Tun together; one that went so far as to maintain that there was no difference between their doctrines and those of Seng-chao.[44] Furthermore, Chao does not specify the names or the authors of the three theories he refutes in his Pu Chen K'ung Lun. According to T'ang Chi-tsang knew that there were three schools at Ch'ang-an that Seng-chao refuted. He also says that besides these there was a chi-se theory from Kuan-chung. Now the tradition of praise for Tao-an and Tao-lin must have been strong enough for Chi-tsang to have adapted the theory from Kuan in an effort to prevent having it look as if Chao was criticizing Tao-lin.[45] Indeed, Liebenthal states that he adapted this theory as a ". . . facesaving device to prevent the appearance of one patriarch blaming another. . ."[46]

Thus it appears that both the chi-se k'ung and the se shih k'ung theories are to be ascribed to Chih Tun; and that Chi-tsang is in error in attributing the former to someone else. We shall now proceed to examine the evidence that we have accumulated about these chi-se theories of Chih Tun.

C. The Chi-se Theory

C1. Main Sources

The first mention of a theory that Hui-ta (1a) and Yüan-k'ang (1) and Ancho (3) attribute to Chih Tun is to be found in Seng-chao's essay, "The Emptiness of the Unreal", which presents a critical appraisal of this doctrine. This criticism will be discussed below. The doctrine he cites is this:

> . . . What opinions are there concerning the void?. . . That it is identical with matter (chi-se che). This means that matter does not cause itself to be matter, and so, although it is matter, yet it is not matter . . .[47]

Yuan-k'ang maintains that the source of the ideas cited by Chao is the Miao Kuan Chang from the Chih Tun Chi, rather than the Chi-se yu Hsüan Lun ("Treatise on Wandering in the Mystery Without Departing from Matter as Such"), which bears in its title the phrase, chi-se, the name of the theory refuted by Chao above.[48] There are extant fragments of both. The Miao Kuan Chang is

preserved in the Commentary to the Shih Shuo Hsin Yü:

> The nature of matter is such that matter does not exist by itself. This being so, it is empty, although (seemingly existent as) matter. Therefore it is said that matter is identical with Emptiness, and again (on account of its seeming existence) different from Emptiness.[49]

The Chi-se Yu Hsüan Lun is cited by Hui-ta (4) in his Chao Lun Shu:[50]

> I hold that 'matter as such' is emptiness and that matter does not (need to) be eliminated (in order to reach) Emptiness. These words express the highest (Truth). Why is this? The nature of matter is such that matter does not exist by itself; it is empty, although (seemingly existent as) matter. In the same way knowing does not know by itself; and is therefore always tranquil, although (seemingly active as) knowing.[51]

Chi-tsang's citation of this work is confined to stating that matter as such is empty.[52] Ancho's version of this work is almost identical with the last three-fourths of Hui-ta's.[53]

It is quite difficult to evaluate Yuan-k'ang's statement concerning the source of Chao's version of the chi-se theory. Now the Chi-se . . . Lun includes a phrase about knowing not knowing by itself. Perhaps Chao's not mentioning this idea is evidence that he did not know of it. However this assumption is quite tenuous. For the time being let us keep it in mind. We shall present more evidence below that seems to corroborate Yüan-k'ang on this point.

C2. Evaluations by Early Chinese and Japanese Śūnyavādins

In our effort to elucidate and assess Chih Tun's chi-se theory more fully, we are quite fortunate to have a number of early critiques of this theory from a śūnyavāda perspective. We can divide these into two groups: positive and negative. Chi-tsang, Ancho, and an unknown Japanese commentator represent the former. Seng Chao and Yuan-k'ang represent the latter.

Chi-tsang, commenting on the notion in the Chi-se Yu Hsüan Lun that "matter as such is itself empty . . ." maintains that Chih Tun, ". . . without destroying the unreal phenomena . . . speaks of reality . . ."[54] We take this to mean that Chih Tun understands that the notion of emptiness does not connote annihilation. In fact, in the Chi-se . . . Lun, we read: "matter does not need to be eliminated (in order to reach) Emptiness . . ."[55] According to Chi-tsang, Tao-lin understands that Reality, i.e., Emptiness, is not the mere annihilation of unreal phenomena such as matter. Chi-tsang concludes that in this notion, Chih Tun does not differ from Tao-an's ideas concerning the emptiness of the original nature.[56] We shall pursue this in greater detail in chapter 4.

Ancho focuses upon another aspect of Chih Tun's

Chi-se . . . Lun. His attention is drawn to the paradoxical ideas that although matter does not exist by itself and is hence empty, it nonetheless exists; and that although knowing does not exist by itself and is hence tranquil (chi), it nonetheless knows:

> His idea here is this: matter and mind are both empty as to their nature; this is the highest truth. Yet this 'empty' matter and mind are nowhere non-existent; this is the worldly truth.[57]

In resorting to the saṃvṛti/paramārtha distinction in order to explain the above paradoxes, Ancho uses what constitutes, as we have seen in our earlier discussion of the Prajñāpāramitā in India, one of the typical modes of explication of a Mahayana paradox.

Ancho cites another commentary on the Mādhyamika Sastra by an unknown Japanese author that evaluates the Chi-se . . . Lun of Chih Tun:

> If we examine this idea, (we see that) it is identical with (that of Seng-chao) regarding the emptiness of the unreal. For matter, being subject to causation, exists only as the result of causation and not in itself. Hence it is termed empty - as emptiness that does not wait upon its destruction. This is the reason for saying that as to the nature of matter, it does not exist as matter of itself and, not existing of itself, though (seemingly) matter, it is (really) empty. However this does not go to the biased extreme of saying that there is no such thing (as empty matter) itself. Therefore we may know that it is identical with (the theory of) the emptiness of the unreal.[58]

There are a number of things worthy of note in this commentary. Firstly, the anonymous author maintains that

the idea of matter not existing by itself implies that matter exists only as a result of causation. This is a perfectly acceptable *śūnyavāda* notion. It is said that because Chih Tun accepts a relative existence for matter rather than denying it any existence at all, that his ideas coincide with those of Seng-chao in his *Pu Chen K'ung Lun*.

However this does not seem to be congruent with Seng Chao's own appraisal. In this particular essay Chao attacks the *chi-se* theory, although he does not name any one person as the proponent of such a theory. In making this critique he initiates the line of negative evaluation of the *chi-se* exegesis. We examine the passage in full:

> What opinions are there concerning the void? . . . That it is identical with matter. This means that matter does not cause itself to be matter and so although it is matter, yet it is not matter. Now the word 'matter' has only to be applied to matter for that to be matter; matter can be matter without having caused itself to be matter. These people have only said that matter does not cause itself to be matter; they have not understood how matter is not matter.[59]

Professor T'ang, Yung-T'ung offers an extensive commentary that elaborates and interprets Chao's criticism. Because it throws considerable light upon the criticism we here present a translation of its most significant arguments. Commenting on Chao's assertion that matter can be matter without having caused itself to be matter, T'ang says:

> This is called 'matter's not becoming matter by depending upon causing itself to be matter'. It is identical with this theory that 'matter has no self nature'; and furthermore it is identical with these words: 'matter does not cause itself to be matter'. Furthermore, 'matter not causing itself to be matter is identical with what is called matter's not becoming matter by depending on any self nature that causes matter to be matter. Matter originally borrows existence as it follows a cause. Its original nature is void and non-existent. Thus, it is the borrowed existence of matter (i.e. the matter that is involved in causation) that is this matter (therefore (Chao) said: 'if one applies matter to matter one gets matter'). This is none other than an existing self nature that causes matter to be matter.
> . . . This is called 'causes coming together to produce existence and due to this matter being void'. Therefore the matter that arises from causation can be likened to a magical illusion or a dream, non-existent in and of itself (yet) existing. Moreover, this voidness follows from causal dependence and from matter's not causing itself to be matter. What Master Chih has not yet become aware of is that the causally dependent borrowed matter is (itself) too identical with voidness. Therefore Master Chao refuted him by saying: 'These people have only said that matter does not cause itself to be matter; they have not understood how matter is not matter.[60]

T'ang then cites a corroborating argument from Yüan-k'ang:

> . . . Dharma Master (Tao-) Lin only knows to say that matter is not matter in and of itself, and that matter develops according to causation. However he does not understand that matter is void; and he thus still preserves a borrowed existence.[61]

Although Seng Chao, Yüan-k'ang, and (following them and explicating them) T'ang, agree with Chih Tun that matter does not cause itself to be matter and is thus void, they

criticize him for seeing only one aspect of Voidness. According to their critique, Chih Tun has made this causation-linked voidness of matter identical with matter's void self nature and has hence failed to see that matter is void quite independently of its participation in causal processes.[62] To them, Chih Tun's error is that he makes Voidness only the result of causation.

This becomes somewhat clearer if we introduce the _saṃvṛti/paramārtha_ distinction.[63] Chih Tun correctly understood the conventional truth that matter arises from the combination of causes and is hence void. However, he errs in making this causation identical with the void self-nature; for what this does in effect is raise a _saṃvṛti_ truth to the _paramārtha_ level. Another way to phrase this is that the definition that matter is void due to its participation in causal processes is merely a _saṃvṛti_ truth. The _paramārtha_ truth is simply that matter is intrinsically void, whether it is _explained_ by causation or not. As Robinson says in reviewing Chih Tun's theory:

> . . . He seems to have understood that own-being is not dependent on another and hence form has no own-being and is empty. Seng Chao agrees with this, but adds that this theory neglects the principle that form is intrinsically devoid of the nature of form, and not merely composite and contingent . . . .[64]

Hence Chih Tun, according to Chao, sees only the _saṃvṛti_ truth/explanation of voidness as due to causation and thinks that it is a _paramārtha_ truth. Thus he has

failed to see that the "causally dependent borrowed matter," as well as causation itself, is intrinsically identical with complete voidness. He thus "preserves a borrowed existence" and does not realize how "matter is not matter," i.e., how matter is void.

To this point we have presented two antithetical interpretations of whether or not Chih Tun's theory of chi-se accurately presents śūnyavāda ideas. On the one hand, Chi-tsang, Ancho, and the unknown commentator cited by the latter all maintain that the chi-se theory does understand these ideas. On the other hand, Seng Chao, Yuan-k'ang, both concur that it does not understand them. Not surprisingly, we find these differences reflected in the modern Western scholarship on the chi-se theory.

D. Modern Western Scholarship on the Chi-se Theory

Fung, concluding from Ancho, maintains that the chi-se theory of Chih Tun is ". . . in essential agreement with Seng-chao's theory of the emptiness of the unreal."[65] He further states that Chih Tun's phrase, "Knowing does not know of itself" from the Chi-se Yu Hsūan Lun, ". . . would seem to be in agreement with the third chapter in Seng-chao's Book of Chao entitled 'On Prajñā not knowing'."[66]

On the other hand, Liebenthal continues the critique of Chih Tun initiated by Seng-chao. Furthermore, Liebenthal views Tao-lin as a Neo-Taoist rather than a Buddhist; and consequently feels justified in applying the characteristic

t'i-yung pattern to the surviving fragments of the chi-se theory.[67] Equating t'i-yung with k'ung-se (rūpa-śūnya), he maintains that Tao-lin makes a distinction between these two states whereas Chao wants them identified:

> . . . Tao-lin, most probably, did not know of the Middle Path and thought of a difference between World (rūpa) and non-World (śūnya) which has to be overcome by the believer.[68]

Accordingly, Liebenthal sees Chao's critique as follows:

> . . . Above he says . . . 'śūnya is identical with rūpa as it is found', not by any steps taken to overcome any difference which may be there. Because there is identity, it need not be made. It is made. There is no need to wait until rūpa is identified with itself in order that there be rūpa. . . .[69]

Liebenthal's statements ignore the assertion by Chih Tun that matter is identical with Voidness (cf. above, subsection Cl.) However we must understand that he is here explicating Seng Chao and that Chao himself does not deal with this assertion. Liebenthal is unique in that he interprets what Chao says about chi-se to be a critique of the pen wu ("fundamental non-existence") exegesis of śūnyatā. According to Liebenthal this exegesis conceived of a difference between śūnya and rūpa because they could not break away from their own native t'i-yung pattern. Thus, he says of Chih Tun:

> . . . by Tao-lin, as by all other neo-Taoists, the universe was always understood as a state (a blissful mysterious realm) superior to human imperfection, attainable only through some kind of change.[70]

A fuller discussion of pen wu awaits the reader below.

Zürcher follows the critique of Seng Chao, pursuing it more along the lines of Yuan-k'ang than does Liebenthal. In doing so, he takes a position that is, in fact, quite opposed to that of Liebenthal:

> . . . According to Chih Tun, this principle of causation, this conditional state is what is meant by Emptiness. Hence, Emptiness is not anything apart from 'matter', a substrate of which 'matter' would be a manifestation. It is simply identical with matter: 'matter does not need to be eliminated in order to reach Emptiness.'[71]

Thus Zürcher agrees with the notion that Chih Tun's Emptiness is inextricably linked to causation. Further-more he indirectly rejects Liebenthal's application of the t'i-yung pattern to the chi-se theory by maintaining that Tao-lin identifies matter and Emptiness rather than think-ing of the former as the manifestation of the latter. There is direct textual support for this position in the Chi-se Yu Hsuan Lun which says: "chi-se shih k'ung", i.e., "matter as such is identical with voidness".

Rather than concentrate upon this phrase (which, as we shall contend, is one of particular importance), Zürcher proceeds with a critique of chi-se that is quite in line with Chao/Yüan:

> . . . According to the Buddhist principle of interdependent causation, 'matter' and 'Knowing' (i.e. the skandhas . . .) do not exist 'by them-selves'. In fact, they can neither be pronounced to be existent nor non-existent; they exist as ephermeral moments in the process of causation,

> links in an eternal chain of cause and effect which has no other substantiality than that of causation itself. According to Chih Tun, this principle of causation is what is meant by emptiness. . . .
> . . . Strictly speaking, Chih Tun's exegesis comes closer to the Hinayanistic point of view than to that of the Mahayana principle of universal Emptiness. There is considerable difference between his interpretation of Emptiness as being the conditional nature of all 'matter' . . . and the Mahayana concept of Emptiness, which reduces all phenomena and notions, including that of causation itself, to a phantasmagoria. For this reason Chih Tun's theory was severely criticized by Seng Chao . . . for not being drastic enough; according to this first Chinese Madhyamika specialist, Chih Tun saw only the conditional and causal nature of all phenomena, but did not realize the complete truth, viz. that conditionality and causality themselves are mere names without any underlying reality.[72]

Although Zürcher in his description of the Mahayana and Mādhyamika concepts of Emptiness here comes a bit too close to reaching what Chi-tsang called above "destroying the unreal phenomena", he seems to have understood the gist of Chao/Yüan's critique as explained by T'ang.

Thus both Fung and Zürcher align themselves with the two earlier modes of evaluating the chi-se theory, one on each side. We reluctantly place Liebenthal among the critics, although his understanding does not seem to be borne out by actual textual data. However we shall take up once again the problem of the influence of the t'i-yung pattern upon Chih Tun in another context in chapter 4.

E. Argument Concerning the Two Positions of Interpretation of the Chi-se Theory

Now, as we have seen, there are basically two positions on Chih Tun's chi-se theory. One maintains that this theory reflects a good knowledge of śūnyavāda; and the other maintains that it does not. If we inquire a bit more closely into the respective sources used by each of these positions, a rather interesting fact emerges. Each representative of the former position cites Chih Tun's Chi-se Yu Hsüan Lun.[73] And although the most recent representatives of the latter position (Zürcher, Liebenthal) are aware of the surviving fragments of this source, the first one who established this position (Seng Chao) was probably not. Let us examine the evidence for this contention.

We have already noted the fact that Yüan-k'ang states that the source of the chi-se theory criticized by Seng-chao in the Pu Chen K'ung Lun is the Miao Kuan Chang rather than the Chi-se Yu Hsuan Lun.[75] Furthermore we do not know from this information whether or not Yüan-k'ang knew any more about this latter text than its name. We do know that Hui-ta presents a fragment of the text; but this appears in his Chao Lun Shu rather than in the Preface to the Chao lun that we do know that Yüan-k'ang was aware of.[76] Hence we possess no direct evidence that either Seng-Chao or Yüan-k'ang ever saw any part of the Chi-se Yu Hsüan Lun. On the contrary, there does seem to be a

textual argument that suggests that neither one did.

We have noted above that the argument in the *Chi-se . . . Lun* that "knowledge does not know if itself" is absent from Chao's critique; and we have further noted that this is not sufficient evidence in itself to indicate that Chao did not see this text. However there is another important phrase in the extant fragment that we would like to focus upon:

> I hold that matter as such is identical with Voidness; and that it is not the case that matter must be extinguished in order for there to be Voidness. . . .[77]

The main criticisms of the *chi-se* theory as set forth by Seng-chao and Yüan-k'ang is that it only sees Voidness as the lack of own-being of matter due to its participation in causal processes; and hence it "preserves a borrowed existence" (i.e., causation itself). It fails to see that matter is void independent of causal processes. That is, as Robinson says, it fails to see that matter is intrinsically void and not merely composite and contingent. Now, to our reading, the above phrase meets this criticism exactly. The key to this interpretation rests on a particular understanding of the second part of the phrase. Chi-tsang interprets this to mean that Voidness is not the annihilation of existence *in toto*, i.e., that Voidness is something other than the *wu* of *yu/wu*.

Now this wu (of yu/wu) can be seen as an essential component in the dynamic processes of life since that which is yu in one instant is certainly wu in the next. In fact, the alternation of yu and wu is simply another way in which to conceive of causation. T'ang cites a text called the Ta Ho Ch'eng T'ien Shu by one Tsung Shao Wen which comments upon the chi-se theory. One passage therein can provide some idea of what we mean with this notion that cuasation is the alternation of yu and wu:

> Now matter does not cause itself to be matter. Although it is matter it is however void. Causes come together and there is existence. Originally, existence comes from non-existence. Both are like what is created in an illusion, like what is seen in a dream. Although they exist, they do not exist. The future has not yet arrived; the past is already extinguished; the present does not last; and again, nonexistence establishes existence.[79]

Quite clearly here, the movement of future into present into past (i.e., change and cuasation) consists of a fleeting yu emerging from and then plunging back into wu. Hence we are suggesting the possibility of conceiving of causation as the alternation of yu and wu. To our reading, the text does seem to do just this.

When seen in this light, Chih Tun's statement that matter (as yu in this particular analogy) does not have to be extinguished (proceed into wu) in order for there to be Voidness can be seen to say that there is Voidness apart from the causal processes that are the alternations of

yu and wu. Or in other words, matter does not need to be a participant in cuasation in order to establish its voidness: matter is intrinsically void. This is paramārtha satya, whereas the arguments that matter is void due to its participation in causal processes represent simply saṃvṛti satya. In this manner Chih Tun avoids the error of making this causally linked voidness of matter a paramārtha truth. And in this way also sees that this causally-linked voidness is also, in its turn, void. Hence, with this reading and interpretation, the main criticisms of the chi-se theory that were initiated by Seng Chao are overcome.

Now given this understanding of chi-se we are left with a serious question: did Chih Tun conceive of Voidness as pen wu (as Liebenthal seems to suggest); or did he possess a more accurate śūnyavādin understanding? This will be the focal point of our investigation in chapter 4.

To sum up, this textual argument provides more evidence for the contention that both Seng-chao and Yüan-k'ang did not see the Chi-se . . . Lun. It is however certainly possible that each did see this text and simply interpreted it differently than we have. This is certainly the case with T'ang, Liebenthal and Zürcher. On the other hand, Chi'tsang et al. all specifically cite the text and all conclude favourably about Tao-lin's understanding of the śūnyavāda.

This argument also throws some light upon Chi-tsang's and Ancho's differing so directly with Seng-chao's critique of Tao-lin. And this can serve to further explicate Chi-tsang's peculiar business about the two chi-se theories. We can now suggest that the one he attributed to the teacher from Kuan-nei is based only upon the Miao Kuan Chang; whereas the theory he attributed to Tao-lin is based on the Chi-se . . . Lun, which he does specifically cite. Hence it is certainly possible that Chi-tsang, not knowing the former source, would attribute the theory refuted by Chao to someone other than Tao-lin, since Lin's name was associated with the Chi-se . . . Lun which does, as we have seen, overcome the criticism leveled by Seng Chao. Rather than being a case of "face-saving" as Liebenthal and T'ang have suggested, it may very well be that Chi-tsang would not have associated the refuted doctrine with Tao-lin because what he directly knew of him completely avoided the mistake of the doctrine Chao refutes. It would then seem quite reasonable for him to seek a source elsewhere.

If our argument is acceptable then it would also seem that Chih Tun understood the śūnyavāda much better than he is generally acknowledged to have. In fact there are passages in Chih Tun's only extant complete work, the "Preface to a Synoptic Extract of the Larger and Smaller Versions (of the Prajñāpāramitā)" that can be seen to support both our argument and its results. A presentation

of these must, however, await certain remarks about the Taoist and Buddhist influences upon the *chi-se* theory.

We must also caution that the main thrust of our arguments about the two texts as separate bases for the two lines of evaluation of the *chi-se* theory is to propose an alternate way of synthesizing the various pieces of material that surround this theory than did someone like Zürcher. We feel that we can do no more than suggest this - for there is not sufficient available material to offer a truly satisfactory proof.

F. Taoist/Buddhist Influences on the *Chi-se* Doctrine

As we have already noted above, Zürcher has indirectly criticized Liebenthal's application of the *t'i-yung* pattern to the *chi-se* theory by showing, with clear textual support, that for Chih Tun, matter and Voidness are identical. Voidness is not anterior to matter. Hence a most basic requirement for the justified application of this pattern is lacking.

Zürcher offers assertions of his own about the Taoist basis of this doctrine:

> . . . The idea seems to be that matter exists 'as such' i.e. it lacks any permanent substrate, any sustaining or creative principle which 'causes matter to be matter'. In this Chih Tun's theory forms an amalgamation of secular and Buddhist thought. Hsiang Hsiu and Kuo Hsiang have already categorically denied the existence of a creative power or a permanent substance behind the things: 'There is nothing which can cause

> the things to be things.' All things exist spontaneously by themselves. Chih Tun's theory represents a Buddhist elaboration of this idea.[80]

To begin with, the idea that there is no permanent substrate underlying matter is not peculiar to Hsiang/Kuo. It is also an important tenet of all forms of Buddhism, i.e., the _anātmavāda_. Hence the presence of such an idea in Chih Tun does not necessarily indicate neo-Taoist influence. Furthermore, it would seem that Chih Tun's phrase, "matter does not cause itself to be matter" is intended to be a denial of own-being of matter rather than a denial of the causative influence of some all-encompassing force that underlies matter. Also, Zürcher characterizes Hsiang/Kuo's _tzu-jan_ conception as "All things exist spontaneously by themselves." He then defines the "Buddhist" notion of causation stating that "matter and knowing . . . do not exist by themselves." (Cf. note 71.) Aside from the fact that these two phrases share the denial of a permanent underlying substrate, they are quite antithetical. Hsiang/Kuo's theory does not question the final reality of the things themselves. Chih Tun's does. (E.G., "matter is identical with Voidness") Hsiang/Kuo's things exist by and through themselves as opposed to existing by and through some underlying other. Chih Tun's things exist only in relation to other things via causation and as such do not exist in and by themselves. The

two ideas are quite distinctly different; and it is difficult to see how the former could have had a strong influence on the latter. Indeed, we have already seen Tao-lin (in his Hsiao Yao Yu Lun) take a position quite opposed to Hsiang/Kuo's society in which each man is free to follow his own nature.[81] And is not this laissez-faire notion grounded in their theory that all things spontaneously exist by themselves?

As for Buddhist influences upon the chi-se theory, T'ang and Zurcher have located a passage in Chih Ch'ien's (fl. 186) translation of the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa which bears a most striking resemblance to the formulation of the theory that survives in the fragment of the Chi-se Yu Hsüan Lun:[82]

> The Bodhisattva Priyadarśana said (to Vimalakirti when asked to define the nature of non-duality): 'The world is just (identical with) emptiness; (consciously) to make it so forms a duality. Matter is emptiness: it is not so that matter (must be) destroyed (to reach) emptiness,[83] but the very nature of matter is emptiness. (underlining inserted) (The same may be said of the other skandhas; thus) knowing (vijñāna, consciousness) is emptiness; it is not so that knowing must be destroyed (to reach emptiness, but the very nature of knowing is emptiness. This realization of the (true) nature of the five dark(-ening) elements (skandhas), constitutes the way leading to non-duality.[84]

It seems significant that the very phrase from Chih Tun's fragments which we have taken to mean that his understanding of Voidness was not merely confined to its causation-linked aspect, is found in this important

Mahayana sutra; and it seems of further significance that therein it is followed by a phrase (i.e., "the very nature of matter is emptiness) which is intended to indicate precisely this idea (i.e., that matter is intrinsically void.) Furthermore, there can be little doubt that this particular text was amply available to Chih Tun. Indeed, Zürcher states that it was the single most popular Buddhist text within Tao-lin's gentry class during the fourth century.[85] This would seem to lend considerable support to our argument above. In the least, it indicates that there is much more concrete evidence of a Buddhist influence on the chi-se theory than a Taoist one.

This passage also serves to provide further evidence for our textual argument (i.e., that Seng Chao was only aware of Chih Tun's Miao Kuan Chang and not aware of his Chi-se . . . Lun.) In Chao's essay "The Emptiness of the Unreal," just a bit after he has criticized the chi-se theory, he cites this very passage from the Vimalakīrti in order to explicate his own position.[86] In fact, not only is it this very same passage, but, more specifically, the idea that he uses is the crucial one from the Chi-se . . . Lun (i.e., "It is not the case that matter must be eliminated in order for there to be voidness.") Now since this passage from the Vimalakīrti expresses virtually the same idea as that expressed in our crucial passage from Chih Tun's Chi-se . . . Lun, this would argue that Chao did not

have access to this work on the *chi-se* doctrine. It is difficult to see, if Chao did indeed know of the *Chi-se . . . Lun*, how he would have been able to cite this passage from the *Vimalakīrti* that expresses almost verbatim the crucial idea in the *Chi-se . . . Lun* that we have interpreted as overcoming his critique of the *chi-se* theory, and still gone on to criticize this theory. This does not seem likely.

We have argued that the small phrase in the *Chi-se . . . Lun*, "it is not the case that matter must be eliminated in order for there to be voidness", overcomes the critiques of the *chi-se* theory that were initiated by Seng Chao. Now let us see if there are any Indian correlates for this notion of the intrinsic voidness of matter.

If we examine his statement in the *Chi-se Yu Hsüan Lun*, we find him maintaining that: 1. matter is void due to its participation in causal processes; 2. matter is void independent of these processes. If this latter statement is isolated and viewed alone, it looks rather much like an arbitrary assertion of a transcendent voidness. When viewed in context, however, its effect is to augment and counterbalance the statement that it follows. Chih Tun first asserts the causation-linked voidness; then he denies it by asserting instead a non-causation-linked voidness. This goes right to the heart of a central question in the Indian literature to which both Suzuki and

Wayman address themselves.[87] This is the problem of the voidness of voidness and the role of "intuition" or "vision" respectively.

This can be most clearly explained by importing once again the *saṃvṛti/paramārtha* distinction. From the standpoint of the conventional truth it can be said that there is both the conventional truth that matter exists and the absolute truth that due to its participation in causal processes, matter is void. Now, from the standpoint of absolute truth there is just voidness, that which cannot be expressed. Whenever one tries to express this voidness, one ends up back at the *saṃvṛti* standpoint *talking about paramārtha*. Wayman cites the "Understanding the Two Truths (*Satyādvāyavatara*) Sutra":

> Devaputra, from the absolute standpoint if absolute truth were to enter the corporeal, physical realm, it would not be counted as 'absolute truth'. It would be just conventional truth. Indeed Devaputra, absolute truth transcends all conventional language, is devoid of qualities, unborn, unceasing, free from the thing named and the name, free from the knowable and the knowledge (of it).[88]

Based on this, we can see that when Tao-lin says that there is voidness independent of causal processes, he expresses the *paramārtha* experience in which it is realized that the so-called "absolute truth" of the causally-linked voidness of matter is itself void; it only appears to be substantial from the standpoint of conventional truth. By denying that one can understand the

voidness of matter as only due to causation, Chih Tun asserts that there is an inexpressible paramārtha satya that matter is void. In chapter II, Suzuki communicates this as:

> . . . The idea of Emptiness grows out of experience and in order to give it a logical foundation the premise is found in relativity . . . .[89]

This paramārtha satya of voidness then, grows from an experience that to Suzuki is "intuition", to Wayman is "Vision". It is the experience of the voidness of the causally-linked voidness and of the voidness of the experience itself. We find that all of this is implied in Teo-lin's notions that matter is void due to causation and that matter is void not due to causation. We thus see Chih Tun as refusing to grant the causally-linked voidness of matter any ontological validity and as pointing to the visionary experience in which this is grounded. Chih Tun seems to have penetrated to the core of a central problem in the PP. However, given the rather striking similarity between his chi-se theory and the passage in the Vimalakīrti, this is not all that surprising. In fact, his theory could very well have been an imitation of just this passage. A more reliable test of his comprehension will be to examine his other writings that do not exhibit so direct a possible influence.

In summation, we have learned a great deal about Chih Tun in this chapter. Beginning with his biography,

we have discussed his Hsiao Yao Yu commentary and then proceeded to his chi-se theory. At the beginning of this section we examined the sources of this theory as well as the confusion about the two chi-se theories apparently generated (and understandably so, as we have proposed) by Chi-tsang. We then discovered that there were two lines of evaluation of this theory and then suggested an alternate reading of a phrase form the Chi-se . . . Lun fragment that to us overcame the criticisms established by the line of negative evaluation. Additionally we proposed the argument that these two lines of evaluation were actually brought about by the initiators of the negative line's failure to have access to the Chi-se . . . Lun. We offered the following evidence in support of this argument:

1. Yuan-k'ang states that Seng Chao did not see the Chi-se . . . Lun and only saw the Miao Kuan Chang.

2. The Chi-se . . . Lun contains an idea that overcomes Chao et al.'s critique of the chi-se theory.

3. Later on in the very same essay in which he criticizes the chi-se theory Seng Chao uses a phrase from the Vimalakīrti to explain his own position that is almost verbatim the same as the phrase in the Chi-se . . . Lun that we have interpreted as overcoming Chao's critique of this theory.

4. This argument we propose offers a more substantial (than "face-saving device") reason for Chi-tsang's

thinking that there were two chi-se theories. Since what he knew of Chih Tun's chi-se theory completely overcomes Chao's critique of this theory, he could not imagine how Chao could be criticizing Chih Tun's chi-se theory. Hence he attributed the theory criticized by Chao to another.

Furthermore we looked into the Taoist and Buddhist influences on this theory, finding the Vimalakīrti passage and concluding that not only is there more evidence of a Buddhist influence, but also that Chih Tun even seems to have been aware of certain quite subtle problems as discussed by the Indian Śūnyavāda.

However, on this very last point there is a bit more to be said that can also serve to introduce our next section. Although we have seen that Chih Tun was aware of the intrinsic voidness of matter (as a "visionary experience"), the chi-se theory itself does not provide any further evidence of what Chih Tun thought of the nature of this voidness.

This is a point of particular importance. T'ang and Link both suggest that Chih Tun shared in the pen wu interpretation of voidness. Chi-tsang too has stated that Chih Tun and Tao-an, the most famous representative of this interpretation, shared the same ideas.[90] According to the pen-wu understanding, voidness was a more fundamental form of the wu of yu/wu (i.e., of the nonexistence that is bound up with existence.) This pen wu notion can be

seen to have developed out of the Chinese grappling with the idea that voidness is not annihilation. But to certain modern scholars, this interpretation failed to escape the confinements of the inherently Chinese t'i-yung (fundamental-functive) pattern and as a result made the mistake of granting Voidness a kind of ontological validity. This would certainly be anathema to an Indian Śūnyavādin.

Now the question remains, did Chih Tun share in this conception of Voidness, or did he break from it? Upon the resolution of this question does our final evaluation of Chih Tun's understanding of the PP come to rest. We are fortunate that there is extant material available ("The Preface to a Synoptic Extract of the Larger and Smaller Versions of the PP") in which we can find some of the necessary evidence.

So in our last chapter we shall investigate this work, paying particular attention to Chih Tun's understanding of Voidness, and carefully contrasting this understanding to that of Tao-an. In this manner we shall be able to examine the extent to which he assimilated the central Indian PP notion of Voidness.

CHAPTER 4: CHIH TUN'S PREFACE TO THE SYNOPTIC EDITION

Certainly the most valuable of the surviving works of Chih Tun is the "Preface to the Synoptic Edition of the Greater and Lesser Versions (of the *Prajñāpāramitā*)" (*Ta hsiao p'in tui pi yao ch'ao hsu*). It has been preserved in Shih Seng-yu's *Ch'u San tsang chi chi* (Taisho 55.55 ff.) and is also available in Yen K'o Chun's *Ch'üan Shang-ku san-tai Ch'in Han san-kuo liu-ch'ao wen* (chuan 157, 6a1-9b10).[1] The work that it precedes, a collected comparison of selected passages from the early Chinese translations of the *Aṣṭa* and *Pañca*, is now lost.[2] We are quite fortunate that this preface has been preserved intact.

I. Taoist Influence

There can be little doubt that this Preface shows the unmistakeable stamp of Taoist influence. Many of the phrases, ideas, and allusions in it are taken directly from the Dark Learning and from the earlier Taoist texts. For example, the Preface begins by describing the *Prajñāpāramitā* as ". . . The deep treasury (*yüan fu*) of all wonders (*miao ch'ung*), the mysterious origin (*hsüan tsung*) of all wisdom . . ."[3]. This description is, as Zürcher points out, highly similar to the description of Tao in chapter 1 of *Lao Tzu*.[4] Let us look at another passage:

> . . . the Buddhas, through the fact that Prajñā has no beginning make it clear that all things are automatically just as they are . . . they posit a subtle faculty, thereby broadening their doctrine, telling men to preserve the valley-spirit and thus maintain freedom from preconceptions. They have lined up the many heads in mysterious sameness; they have brought the various numina back to Original Nothingness.[5]

The passage is replete with Taoist allusions. The notion of "beginninglessness" (wu shih) originates in Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu.[6] It is here used to characterize Prajñā. The idea of the natural "self-so-ness" of the myriad things comes, as can be readily seen, from the philosophy of Hsiang/Kuo.[7] The "valley-spirit" (ku shen) is a frequent image in Lao Tzu[8]. The notion of "return" originates in Lao Tzu[9]; and the return to the state of original nothingness is most developed by Wang Pi.[10] It is an essential characteristic of Liebenthal's t'i-yung pattern.[11] For the time being, we note that at least one of these ideas, the natural 'self-so-ness of the myriad things' is in direct contradiction with what we know of Chih Tun's chi-se theory, which denies the self-nature of phenomena.

This kind of passage is by no means an anomaly in the Preface. Let us examine another passage:

> . . . (the concept of) prajñā-knowledge is born from a name which is (only) the outward manifestation (chi) of the doctrine . . . when the doctrine is provisionally established (by words), then knowledge becomes associated (with definite things). Thus knowledge (as expounded in the scriptures) is associated with definite things,

> whereas the (highest) Reality (shih) remains unmanifested; 'names' (ming) are born from objects, whereas the (highest) Principle (li) is beyond words. Why is this? The highest Principle is dark (and empty) like a ravine, in which everything is reduced to a state of being nameless. The state of being nameless and beginningless constitutes the substance of the Way (tao chih t'i), whereas (the realm of the Saint's manifested activities) where 'there is nothing that may be done' constitutes the attentive attitude (chen) of the Saint. When the Saint by this principle of (compassionate) attention responds to the movements (of the world), then he cannot do without expressing (his doctrine) in words.[12]

Once again we find a passage that is filled with Taoist ideas. "Namelessness" (wu ming) and "beginninglessness" (wu shih) are from *Lao-tzu*. Once again the image of the "Valley" or "ravine" occurs as in the first passage. Zurcher finds here two allusions to *Chuang Tzu*;[13] and he further maintains that Wang Pi's concept that one should "forget the symbols in order to grasp the ideas", and Hsiang/Kuo's notions of the traces (chi) of the Sage are both present.[14] The idea that the Sage responds to the movement of the world comes from Hsiang/Kuo's understanding of wu-wei.[15] Also the phrase "substance of the Way" seems to refer back to Wang Pi's notions of the Transcendent. Zürcher points out that this passage

> . . . is a clear example of hybridization, where the Buddhist pattern of prajñā (inner wisdom) versus upāya ('moyens salvifiques') has merged with the Chinese distinction of the immutable inner mind of the sage and his ever-varying precepts and teachings . . .[16]

One way to analyse this "hybridization" is to view this passage as an attempt to explain the Buddhist pattern that Zürcher mentions in a manner in which it can be clearly understood by one

well-versed in hsüan hsüeh terminology and concepts. The establishment of this pattern would serve to eulogize the Prajñāpāramitā texts that follow this Preface since it maintains that the words contained therein are the result of the Sage's response to phenomena and as such are expressions, however imperfect, of the transcendent prajñā. The explication of this Buddhist pattern in Taoist terms is important because it provides a readily-comprehensible theoretical base that at once establishes the holiness of the scripture that follows while at the same time explaining the reason for its being written.

The Preface continues on much in the same vein. It extolls the virtues of both the texts and the Sage with a profusion of Taoist terms and metaphors into which are sprinkled the occasional Buddhist term. Thus Hurvitz, not unreasonably, in his summary of the text, can only find one "purely Buddhist" notion therein.[17] He furthermore finds that implicit in the text is a version of the t'i-yung pattern that is found in the Dark Learning. He expresses this as:

> Prior and superior to this world of our experience, with its manifold differentiations is the Non-World of Nothingness, to which any of us may return if he can achieve the necessary state of exaltation. That Non-World, being devoid of any and all characteristics has, of course, no name . . .[18]

The occurence of Taoist terms allusions, and particularly this last pattern does not reflect very favorably upon Chih Tun's understanding of the PP. If this Preface is taken at face value

then Chih Tun emerges as a thinker very much confined within the Hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation. This view of him would seem to contradict our assessment of his level of comprehension of the PP, especially the concept of śūnyatā, that we found in his chi-se doctrine.

II. Composition

A. Historical Milieu

It is necessary to place this Preface in its historical perspective. To begin with we have seen that Chih Tun had quite an extensive following of pupils, both among the laity and clergy. Almost without exception these were members of the cultured gentry and aristocracy, men well conversant in the Dark Learning. Now, as we have seen in his biography, Chih Tun was a frequent participant in ch'ing-t'an[19] and was well recognized as an expert on Chuang Tzu. There seems to be little question of his mastery of the contemporary Taoist communications medium. Furthermore, Chih Tun was acclaimed for his ability to explain Buddhist ideas to a Taoistically-grounded audience.[20] We also note that during his stay at the capital (+362-65) he expounded Lokaksema's Aṣṭa (Tao-hsing Ching, T. 224) at the Tung-an Monastery where, ". . . Clerics and laity were filled with admiration and courtiers and private persons gladly submitted (to his words) . . ."[21] Thus it seems quite likely that Chih Tun, practicing the one method of "skillful means"

that was most prevalent during this period, explained the basic ideas of the PP to an audience familiar with the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation using terms and concepts taken from it. The goal that would be inherent in this particular method of "skillful means" would be to encourage both his lay contacts and those already involved in some aspect of Buddhism to delve deeply into the PP approach to the typical philosophical problems of the day.

B. "Rhetorical" Nature

The Preface should be considered in light of this milieu. In doing so, we submit that the main thrust of this work, rather than being a serious statement by Chih Tun of his own theory, is instead a carefully worded attempt to practice "skillful means" to an audience enmeshed within the Taoist tradition. Or, in other words, to call in Robinson's useful distinction, the Preface contains much more "rhetorical apparatus" than it does "technical vocabulary". We are suggesting that the frequent and heavy use of Taoist allusions and ideas is to be seen more as a device to communicate and exhort, in short, to persuade, rather than as an indication that Chih Tun understood Buddhist ideas in these Taoist terms. The eulogy of the PP that constantly recurs throughout the Preface and is expressed in Taoist terms can be seen in this light.

Thus, the assessment that in this Preface Chih Tun's understanding of the PP is confined within the hsüan hsüeh world

interpretation is questioned by the hypothesis that he used this world interpretation in an attempt to involve his audience in the PP. This hypothesis addresses itself to the contradiction between the apparently Buddhist chi-se theory and what had seemed to be a heavily Taoist Preface.

1. Intent of the "Synoptic Edition" (of the Aṣṭa and Pañca)

The hypothesis that we have set forth is supported by the rationale behind the creation of the work that follows the Preface. The intent of Chih Tun's combined edition of Lokaksema's Aṣṭa (T.224) and Moksala's Pañca (T.221) seems to have been to make these two texts more accessible. Certainly there was a need for this. Zürcher cites the fact that one pupil of Chih Tun's, one Yin Hao, objected to the quite difficult literary form of these works. And, as Zürcher adds parenthetically, ". . . nobody who is familiar with these will blame him."[22]. Chih Tun in fact states that the material in these two texts is not very clearly organized and that it is often quite difficult to see the main line of argument in each and hence difficult to compare them. Because of this confusion Chih Tun states,

> . . . If one wishes to push one's quest for the origin and the source and to clarify the essential meaning of these matters, then the expenditure of one's thought will be very great, but one's achievements slight . . .[23]

Yet a cursory reading is deleterious to one's spiritual development: ". . . Furthermore, if one's investigations ignore the specific facts, then the results (of one's progress toward enlightenment)[24] will not be speedy, whatever one may think . . ."[25]. So

that others who wish to study these texts will be spared these difficulties, Chih Tun exhaustively poured through the texts, found the basic purport of each and every passage, and then put together a combined edition, topically organized, in which comparable passages from each text were arranged facing each other on every page. As he says,

> . . . My lines of scrutiny ran consistently from head to tail, tracing the mystical unifying principle, investigating the obstacles to its progress and discerning its obstructions thus enabling the text not to depart from the meaning, the ideas not to oppose the fundamentals, the examinations to have a point of support . . .[26]

Thus it is quite clear that Chih Tun's intent in compiling his new edition was to make the two texts more readily comprehensible and accessible to those who wished to study them. And the rationale behind this would be the Bodhisattva's vow to lead all sentient beings to enlightenment. This would be accomplished in this case by removing the obstacles to the comparative study of those texts which he deemed to be of the utmost necessity for this spiritual evolution. Now given this overriding concern in the main work, it would be highly unlikely for this not to be the overriding concern in the Preface. And furthermore this overriding concern in the Preface provides a clear and definite rationale for the adaptation of "rhetorical" techniques therein. Due to the fact that the audience towards which Chih Tun addresses both his main work and his Preface is steeped in the world interpretation of the Dark Learning, the "rhetorical" techniques that Chih Tun uses must

also be so steeped.

2. The Sage

Zürcher states that the "central topic" of the Preface is the Saint or Sage (sheng), the Perfect Man (chih jen).[27] Hurvitz, in his summary of the Preface, devotes five of his ten headings (under which are subsumed the basic notions inherent in the text) to the topic of the Sage. It is clear that the main focus of the Preface is the Sage. In fact, more emphasis is placed upon describing this Perfect Man than is placed upon eulogizing the PP.

Throughout the Preface the Sage is almost always talked of in Neo-Taoist terms and phrases. The model of perfection here is clearly not a Buddhist one: it is not the bodhisattva engaged in the practice of the prajnaparamita, as might be expected of a Preface to the Aṣṭa and Pañca. It is rather the Taoist Perfect or "Ultimate" man. This is one who has, as Hurvitz says, exalted himself to the "nonworld of Nothingness".[28] In other words this is man who has become one with the t'i of t'i-yung. He is described, in the somewhat hackneyed Taoist phrase, as one who "does nothing yet leaves nothing undone" (wu wei erh wu bu wei). A few Buddhist elements do on occasion come into play in this picture of the Sage; but they are always in some way melded with Taoist ideas.[29]

Furthermore it is significant that the Sage is said to be

one who has exhaustively studied and mastered the PP. In fact, Chih Tun states that there is really no difference between the Buddha and the Sage.[30] Chih Tun waxes eloquent in his description of the Sage as the master of the PP:

> . . . such a man observes the Ford and the Roadway and seeks the point at which they subtley meet. He views their beginning and traces them (ie the PP) to their end, examining to the extreme their recondite meaning. Comprehending the royal signpost of the Greater, he masters the Mysterious Ultimate of the Lesser. Deftly he picks the ford out of the obscure flavour. How subtle! How perfect! There is nothing that can be added to him! He leads the spirit-king of the intelligence to the obscure ford, the varied shapes to the myriad things. His magnitude cannot be fathomed. One should seek him beyond the fish traps and assign him a place beyond the mysterious.[31]

As a description of one who has mastered the PP, this passage clearly represents an exhortation to become involved in these texts, an exhortation that is definitely directed toward those familiar with the hsüan hsüeh. What better way to persuade an audience to study certain texts than to represent the penultimate model of their spiritual aspirations as one who has mastered them? (thus implying that this study is the way to achieve their goal). Hence it seems quite reasonable that the unusual emphasis placed upon the Taoist Sage throughout the Preface, particularly upon the Sage as master of the PP, is done for the purpose of encouraging and persuading an audience that holds this Sage as its ideal of perfection to study the PP texts that follow. As such this emphasis is a "rhetorical device"; and its presence throughout the Preface lends considerable

support for our contention that the basic intent of this text is to persuade, not to expound.

In summation, our hypothesis that the basic purport of the Preface is rhetorical rather than expository is supported by the following:

1. The frequent eulogy of the PP texts expressed within the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation. (cf. section I above).

2. The explanation of any Buddhist ideas that serve to augment this eulogy with notions taken from within the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation. (cf. section I above).

3. The rationale behind the creation of Chih Tun's synoptic edition of the Aṣṭa and Pañca. (cf. II a above).

4. The unusual emphasis placed upon the spiritual ideal of the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation, the Sage (or Perfect or Ultimate Man) as one who has mastered the PP. (cf. II b above).

Hence the conclusions, especially those of Hurvitz, that Chih Tun's "ontology" remains within the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation cannot be clearly attested to from a text in which the author seems to have used numerous expressions, ideas, allusions, patterns, etc. from within this world-interpretation as "rhetorical devices" rather than as means to explain his own theories. The minimal implication of this is that expressions in the Preface that eulogize the PP and describe the Sage cannot be used to provide evidence of Chih Tun's own theories. The maximal implication is that any expression that is clearly within the hsüan hsüeh world interpretation must be used with extreme caution, if used at all as evidence.

C. Four Significant Passages

Given these conclusions concerning the intent of the Preface, it is necessary to decide how to go about deriving evidence of Chih Tun's understanding of the PP from it. Certainly the conclusions do not mean that the Preface cannot be used at all.

The vast majority of the passages in the Preface are devoted to eulogizing the PP, describing the Sage, or discussing the reasons for creating, or the mechanics of, the edition of the Aṣṭa and Pañca that follows. While we do not mean to imply that an analysis of these is completely without merit, the amount of evidence to be gleaned from this, when compared to the difficulties of developing a suitable methodology, would seem to forbid the undertaking of such an analysis within the confines of this particular research effort.

Rather, given our conclusions about the rhetorical intent behind all those passages that are clearly within the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation, it seems best to adapt a cautious approach and use only those passages that seem to be in some way at variance with this world interpretation as evidence of Chih Tun's own theories. To our reading, there are four such passages in the Preface. These are all passages which are concerned with our core problem area of "ontology". We now proceed to examine them in detail in the context of a discussion of the significant ideas that are contained within them.

III. Chih Tun and Tao An

Link, in his research on Tao-an,[34] indicates that there are certain similarities between the thought of this influential Buddho-Taoist and that of Chih Tun. If these similarities are justified, then perhaps Tao-an can be used to help us understand Chih Tun. Link's study focusses upon two passages in Chih Tun's Preface. The first is to be considered in this section. The second is to be considered in the context of the discussion of li in section IV below.

The consideration of the first passage from the Preface in which Link finds certain parallels to Tao-an focusses upon one particular phrase that modifies the PP as scripture, that is, the PP texts. Since Link does not translate the entire passage but only the one particular phrase within it; and in order to present this phrase in some context, we first cite Hurvitz' translation up to the point at which Link's translation of the crucial phrase begins:

> (Hurvitz:)
> Now the Prajñāpāramitā is the deep storehouse of the many subtleties, the mysterious source of the various wisdoms, the place of origin of the intelligent spirit that is king over us all, the proof of the efficacy of the enlightening power of the Thus Come One. As a scripture . . .[35]
>
> (Link:)
> . . . (it is characterized as) absolute nothingness (chih wu), an empty openness within a hollow (k'ung-huo), vast illimitable emptiness (k'uo-jan), the absence of things (wu wu). . .[36]

Now Link finds in this phrase two, two-character combinations - "key descriptive words" - that are also found in a passage attributed (correctly, he later concludes) to Tao-an. Firstly, Chih Tun's combination, k'uo-jan, which Link renders as "vast illimitable emptiness" is found in a passage in which Tao-an describes his notion of pen wu ("original nonexistence")[37] : "merged in darkness prior to creation there was only a vast illimitable emptiness"[38]. Here, Link maintains, k'uo-jan symbolizes a latent state of non-manifestation, pregnant with the potentialities of phenomena. This state comes temporally prior to the state in which phenomena are manifested.[39] In other words, k'uo-jan locates the subject in this sentence, pen wu, in the t'i-position of Liebenthal's t'i-yung pattern.

Secondly, Chih Tun's combination, k'ung-huo, which Link renders as "an empty openness within a hollow", is found in almost the same form (hsü instead of k'ung[40]) in a passage in which Tao-an

> . . . expressly denies that the wu of pen wu is identical with the dichotomous wu in the combination yu wu, 'existence/nonexistence'. 'This does not mean', he (i.e. Tao-an) says, 'that the empty openness within a hollow (hsü-huo) is capable of giving birth to the myriad existing things.'[41]

Now if these two similarities prove to be truly valid, then an understanding of Tao-an's theories may help to shed some light upon those of Chih Tun. In fact, Link does state from these two

similarities that Chih Tun ". . . must have thought of himself as belonging to the (same) general theory of Pen-wu . . ."[42] as did Tao-an.

Link however qualifies his statement. This does not mean, he says, that both Chih Tun and Tao-an possessed the same theories. In fact, Chih Tun seems to have used his own chi-se theory to explain his understanding of pen wu.[43] One of the titles attributed to Chih Tun in Lu Ch'eng's Fa-Lun[44] is an "Explication of the doctrine of chi-se and pen wu" (shih chi-se pen-wu Yi). Hence Link concludes that rather than possessing the same notions, ". . . their exegetical approach to the Prajñāpāramitā brought them both under the general heading of the Pen-wu theory . . ."[46].

This is not as significant as it might seem at first glance. The term "pen wu" had a much wider scope than just the particular interpretation of śūnyatā attributed to Tao-an.[47] Zürcher, citing T'ang, notes that the term pen wu denoted the PP doctrine of universal emptiness in general.[48] And furthermore, Link and T-ang add that since this was the most recurrent problem that was contemplated by the Buddha-Taoists, the term can simply be used to designate all the PP studies of this epoch.[49] Thus it would not be at all surprising if Chih Tun and Tao-an shared a common concern for the problem of pen wu, in this sense understood as a general term for the PP doctrine of emptiness.[50] But can a more specific link between the two monks be established?

As to the two combinations that Link has noted above, it is doubtful if they can provide concrete evidence of a more specific link and hence also doubtful if Tao-an's understanding of these can help shed light upon Chih Tun's understanding of the PP.

To begin with, there is some doubt as to whether or not the use of the first of these combinations, k'uo-jan, indicates a definitive relationship between Chih Tun and Tao-an. Link notes that Liebenthal has located this very combination in Wang Pi's commentary to chapter 20 of the Tao Te Ching.[51] Given the recurrent hsüan hsüeh terminology and imagery in Chih Tun's Preface, we cannot be sure that Chih Tun took the term from Tao-an, (or perhaps even vice-versa). It seems equally likely that he drew upon Wang Pi. However Link's argument does imply that the discovery of the second similarity (between Chih Tun's k'ung-hua and Tao-an's hsü-hua) reinforces the evidence for attributing the first to Tao-an and not Wang Pi. Nonetheless, the recurrent allusions to the hsüan hsüeh in the Preface, coupled with the location of k'uo-jan in Wang Pi and with the almost negligible difference between the two combinations in the second similarity does leave some doubt that the two combinations can be used as evidence of a relationship between Chih-Tun and Tao-an.

Even if we set aside for the time being this doubt, we cannot be sure that Chih Tun understood these two combinations in the same way as did Tao-an (although we can be more certain

with _k'uo-jan_ because it is found in Wang Pi). For Chih Tun simply sets forth these terms in a basic declarative sentence as two in a string of four combinations that modify the PP texts. He does not offer any further explication of the terms. He does not use them as integral parts of an argument as does Tao-an. He makes no attempt to associate them directly with _pen wu_ as does Tao-an. In fact, the terms only occur in this particular passage in the Preface.

Furthermore, even if we accept for the purposes of argument that Chih Tun's use of the combinations in a wholly different context from that of Tao-an presupposes this latter's understanding of these "descriptive words", we cannot really consider them as indications of Chih Tun's own theories because he is using them as part of a eulogy of the PP texts in a Preface intent on exhorting the reader to study these texts. Because these combinations occur in the specific context of this eulogy, it seems likely that both should be classified as "rhetorical apparatus" rather than as "technical vocabulary". If they are so classified, and if we accept the argument that Chih Tun's use of the combinations is related to Tao-an, then this would indicate that Chih Tun's Preface is directed not only at Neo-Taoist laymen but also at Buddha-Taoist clergy who conceivably, as students of Chih Tun, would have been familiar with this passage of Tao-an's.[52]

In conclusion, all we can say with some degree of certainty is that Chih Tun shared Tao-an's concern with pen wu understood as a general term for "universal emptiness". We cannot say whether or not Chih Tun shared any more specific ideas with Tao-an. And thus without more specific evidence we cannot ask Tao-an for help in explicating the theories of Chih Tun. However, we shall have more to say about this below (section IV, part C).

IV. Chih Tun's Notion of Li

A considerable number of Western scholars regard Chih Tun's conception of li as his most significant contribution to the development of Chinese thought.[53] As we shall see, these scholars maintain that Chih Tun introduced an almost completely new element to this development and in doing so paved the way for much of the metaphysics that were to emerge centuries later in the Neo-Confucian movement. The pioneer work on this problem has been done by Demieville[54]; and the problem has subsequently been pursued by Zürcher, Chan, Wright, Liebenthal, and Hurvitz.[55]

A. Background

In order to more clearly comprehend the significance of Chih Tun's conception of li, it is necessary to begin with a brief outline of the evolution of this term prior to him. Since it is not our intention to pursue this evolution in great detail, the reader is referred both to the work of Demieville and to

[56] the more exhaustive study by Chan.

Demieville provides a description which can serve to give some indication of the origins of the notion of li in China:

> . . . De la multiplicité des êtres qui s'offrent à notre expérience bornée, de la diversité des faits, des événements sans cesse changeants, la Chine avait degagé la notion d'un ordre universal, d'une 'rationalité structurelle qui les totalisait et les unifiait. Mais ce li restait compris dans le monde: c'était une explication du monde et de la nature, non pas leur negation . . .[57]

Thus to the ancient Chinese, li originated representing the sum and total of the patterns of change and development that were manifest within the world they experienced. And although as such it represented a kind of abstraction, it was an abstraction with a strong empirical base, one grounded firmly within the phenomenal universe. Hurvitz provides a concise summary of the various meanings that have been ascribed to li from its origins to the time of Chih Tun:

> The semantic Oddyssey of li would be about as follows: arrangement of fields - arrangement of things in general - arrangement of affairs - the natural order, in which affairs are arranged - the adaptation of oneself to the natural order - the control of one's passions - a civilized order, in which every individual controls his passions - a rational socio-political order. Li thus has both microcosmic and macrocosmic connotations. From there it acquires the further meaning of the adaptation of the microcosm to the macrocosm. This is known as 'ultimate li' (chih li). It is at this point that the stage is mounted by Chih Tun.[58]

According to Demieville, the role the Taoists (particularly Lieh-tzu and Chuang-tzu) played in this development was to emphasize

a more transcendent aspect. It is Kuo Hsiang who goes against the Taoist tradition and returns *li* to its old meaning as the "ordre rationnel des êtres sur le plan cosmique et naturaliste"[59]. He does, however admit that even in Kuo Hsiang one can find a few passages emphasizing the transcendent nature of *li*; but nonetheless, these passages still maintain the association of *li* with naturalism. This accords with the understanding of *li* in our first chapter. Hsiang/Kuo's *li* is immanent in phenomena but also stands behind them, providing the structure and order by which the isolated phenomena are linked together.

Although emerging from a different model of the universe, and being associated with man's apprehension of this universe in particular through the *I Ching*, Wang Pi's notion of *li* is similar to that of Hsiang/Kuo in that it involves aspects that are both immanent and transcendent.

Thus, in summing up this discussion of *li* before Chih Tun, we can say that this *li* was a notion of order and pattern which, despite flirtations with transcendence, never lost its grounding in the empirical and natural. And from this we can conclude that this understanding of *li* as primarily immanent, but with an aspect of transcendence, is an essential element in the *hsüan hsüeh* world-interpretation.

B. Li in the Preface

1. Li and Change (Pien)

Now let us proceed to examine the specific passage in which Demieville and Zurcher discover the uniqueness of Chih Tun's understanding of li:

> . . . li is not within Change (pien); Change is not within li. The Doctrine (because it is part of the phenomenal world) is not within the essence (t'i) (of li); and the essence (of li) is not within the Doctrine. Therefore, of the multitudinous changes and myriad transformations, none (whatsoever) is not external to li. So how could there be any movement in the Spirit (of the Sage who is identified with li). It is due to this lack of movement that there can be the responding to change without impoverishment. This responding does not come about because the Sage is located amidst phenomena. . . .[60]

According to Demieville, the originality of Chih Tun's conception of li consists in the fact that in this passage it has completely detached itself from naturalism, from its association with the phenomenal realm; and it has become a pure, idealistic Absolute. He describes this li as "ineffable, unenumerable, inalterable"[61]. This transformation has come about under the impact of Buddhism:

> . . . Le li relève dès lors d'un ordre supernaturel, 'supramondain', comme disent les bouddhistes (lokattara). C'est un absolu à la manière indienne ou neoplatonicienne, en somme indo-europeane, tel que jamais la Chine n'en avait connu jûsque la.[62]

Zürcher concurs with Demieville's assessment. In fact for him, this notion of li as "as Absolutum beyond the limits of

discriminative thought" represents the sole Buddhist element in the entire Preface.[63] Furthermore, he emphasized the significance of the role this conception of li plays in the history of Chinese thought:

> . . . The importance of this fact can hardly be overrated; it represents the beginning of a new phase in Chinese thought. When viewed against the background of early medieval thought, it provides a new starting-point in the ancient controversy between the 'partisans of non-being' and 'those who exalt being' (C.f. above chapter 1) by introducing a new and higher concept which formed the synthesis of both conflicting viewpoints. Here 'being' and 'nonbeing' are interpreted not as a pair of correlates, one being the function or manifestation of the other, but as two aspects of the same arcanum that embraces and transcends both . . .[64]

Thus says Zürcher, this notion of li represents a "major contribution of Buddhism to Chinese thought".[65]

Wright concurs with these assessments and adds that this concept of li as the "transcendental absolute principle as opposed to the empirical data of experience" represents a "new form of dualism" which was later to be the central conception of Neo Confucianism.[66] On this last point, Demieville concurs.[67]

Clearly, with this notion of li Chih Tun has broken decisively with the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation. As we have seen, li is understood in the Dark Learning works, as involving both a transcendent and, most importantly for us here, an immanent element. This latter element is denied by Chih Tun. The role

of li in Chih Tun's thought is in fact more akin to the role of the various terms that Wang Pi uses to designate his t'i than it is to the role of Wang's conception of li. Yet quite clearly for Wang this t'i cannot be separated from its manifestation as yung. These two notions are mutually dependent. And Chih Tun (perhaps even to contrast his understanding of the transcendent with Wang's) expressly denies that there is involvement of li in the phenomenal realm.

It is on this point in the Preface that Chih Tun parts company with the t'i-yung pattern, and, in a wider context, with the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation. Hence there can be little doubt that even in this Preface so dominated by "rhetorical apparatus", this notion of li is to be regarded as an expression of Chih Tun's own theories. As such, it is extremely valuable in the assessment of Chih Tun's understanding of the PP.

Now just what exactly did Chih Tun mean to signify by his use of this term? To Demieville, this li is the Buddhist prajna, ". . . la gnose bouddhique élevée a la hauteur d'une essence ontologique . . ."[68]. To him also, li signifies the Mahayana concept of "Suchness" (tāthatā).[69] Zürcher expands on this a bit by stating that Chih Tun's li represents a merging of the Chinese concept of "cosmic or natural order" with "the Buddhist notion of transcendent Truth, Suchness (tāthatā).[70]

Now, in light of our understanding in chapter 2 of the

interrelated PP notions of prajñā, tāthatā, śūnyatā, the pertinent question that arises here as we attempt to understand Chih Tun's conception of li and to evaluate the comprehension of the PP doctrines that it embodies, is whether or not Chih Tun thought of li as an "absolutum" (as Zürcher maintains) or as an "essence ontologique" as Demieville would have it. This is of particular importance since we have emphasized in our explication of the PP that the notions prajñā, śūnyatā, etc. are not to be thought of in any sense as ontological essences or Absolutes. It would be easy to say that Demieville and Zürcher have misunderstood these terms in the same way as have Obermiller and Warder, and hence have brought their misunderstanding along with them to their evaluation of Chih Tun. However, in this li/Change passage that we have examined, it does in fact appear that li means just what Demieville and Zürcher think that it does.

2. Li as Experience

In order to resolve this question let us examine how Chih Tun deals with li in other passages in the Preface. In doing so, one thing becomes clear: Chih Tun consistently describes li with expressions that are confined within the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation. Thus, for example, he states: ". . . Reaching the Perfection of li is the same as Returning . . ."[71]. In another phrase, he uses an even more vivid Taoist allusion:

> . . . The highest Principle (li) is dark (ming) and (empty like) a ravine in which (everything) is reduced to a state of being nameless . . .[72]

Elsewhere he emphasizes the transcendence of li: ". . . names are born from duality but li cannot be spoken of . . ."[73]; and also: ". . . (when) li is darkly merged with, words are cast aside . . ."[74].

It seems clear from these passages (and from our previous understanding of the use of the profusion of Taoist allusions in the Preface) that Chih Tun is attempting to explain his own notion of li in terms that his Taoist audience can readily understand.

Additionally, Demieville sees a very significant underlying pattern in Chih Tun's use of hsüan hsüeh terminology to elucidate li:

> . . . il (li) appartient a ce domaine de l''obscurité' (ming) du Gnophos, où toute parole est abolie et dont on ne peut faire l'expérience que par l'extase, lorsque 'l'âme se fige en une obscurité mysterieuse'; car pour les taoistes - et cette definition de l'extase est taoistes - l'absolu n'est pas un concept abstrait, c'est un absolu vécu, qui a pour sanction et pour couronnement l'expérience mystique . . .[75]

What Demieville is saying is that the terms that Chih Tun is using to describe li to his Taoistically grounded audience are understood in the Taoist context as terms that symbolize mystical experience. This is extremely important. It tells us that Chih Tun is communicating to his audience the fact that by the term li he means to signify not a metaphysical abstraction but instead, a

certain definite *experience*. And if this is the case then Chih Tun may very well have understood the important visionary aspect of the PP that Suzuki, Wayman, and Robinson have pointed out.[76] However we still do not know whether or not Chih Tun has attributed ontological validity to this "visionary" experience that is apparently symbolized by *li*. It is on this point we feel that a correct understanding of the PP doctrines hinges.

The answers to this question as well as a more specific understanding of the relationship between *li* and Change await us in the next passage from the Preface.

3. *Li* and *Wu*

This next passage in the Preface has been singled out by Link, Liebenthal, Hurvitz, and also by ourselves (for reasons that will become apparent as this section evolves). It presents a very subtle argument that Hurvitz says is "virtually untranslatable".[77] Since there is disagreement over how to translate its two key terms, *li* and *wu*, for the time being we shall leave them untranslated.

> . . . now *wu*: how is it able to be *wu*? *Wu* is not able to be *wu* in and of itself; *li* is also not able to make (itself) *li*. If *li* is not able to make (itself) *li*, then *li* is not *li*. If *wu* is not able to be *wu* in and of itself, then *wu* is not *wu* . . .[78]

Now the first thing that can be derived from this passage is an answer to the question that was raised at the end of the last section, the discussion of *li* as experience. Clearly, by stating

that li cannot make itself li and that because of this li is not li, Chih Tun is denying that li has any self-nature (svabhāva). Thus Chih Tun refuses to grant li ontological validity. Li is neither "essence ontologique" nor "Absolutum". And although li symbolizes an important Buddhist "truth" for Chih Tun, it is also contingent and dependent. The experience of li, whether it be called "vision" or "intuition" is itself clearly Void.

Link omits the li part of the argument and concentrates on wu, which he renders as "nonexistence". He interprets the passage as providing further evidence of the similarities between Chih Tun and Tao-an:

> I believe that Tao-lin, as Tao-an, was quite aware that, in Lao-tzu's phrase, 'existence and nonexistence give birth the one to the other.' Since 'presence' (yu) is only present through being delimited by 'absence', mutatis mutandis, 'wu' in Tao-lin's words, 'cannot be wu in and of itself'. . . . In other words the relative and contingent wu, which occurs in the term yu/wu, 'existence/nonexistence', is not to be equated with the wu (in the sense in which it is sued) in the expression Pen-wu, 'Original Nonexistence'. I would thus interpret Tao-lin's remarks here as referring not to transcendental emptiness (śūnyatā), but to relative emptiness, that is, the mere absence or deprivation of being . . .[79]

Link's interpretation is quite plausible. Both Hurvitz[80] and Liebenthal understand wu in a similar manner to Link. Liebenthal's translation of this passage indicates his basic agreement with Link's yu/wu - Pen wu argument.[81]

There are two minor objections that could be raised to this. Firstly, given the close parallelism in the passage between

the wu-argument and the li-argument, one might expect that if Chih Tun was talking about two levels of wu he would also have to be talking about two levels of li. This, he does not seem to be doing.

Secondly, and more importantly, Link's interpretation grants pen wu ontological validity. What he says in effect is that since (the ordinary) wu is contrasted with yu ("being") and hence does not cause itself to be wu, then this wu cannot be the wu of pen wu. Thus pen wu must be the wu that causes itself to be wu. This would hence be a non-contingent and non-relative wu. If this is so, then pen wu is, according to the śūnyavāda interpretation (and one which we have seen Chih Tun adapt in his chi-se theory), not Void: it can cause itself and thus has svabhāva.

Furthermore, it has been suggested by Hurvitz, Zürcher, and Demieville that Chih Tun's terms, chih wu, pen wu, li, chih li, are all more or less synonomous, symbolizing the notion of "emptiness".[82] Now we have already seen that in this passage, Chih Tun has specifically denied that li has svabhāva. If Link's interpretation is correct than Chih Tun, by distinguishing a non-contingent, non-relative, self-existent pen wu, is directly contradicting his preceeding statement that li has no svabhāva.[83] This does not seem likely.

We would like to propose an alternate reading of the

passage, one that involves our understanding of Chih Tun's chi-se theory,[84] as well as an interpretation of the "Li and Change" passage (part B 1. above). In a certain sense our reading does preserve the basic pattern behind Link's yu/wu - Pen wu argument, namely that there are two levels of emptiness or voidness.

To begin with, it is possible to understand wu in the phrase "wu is not wu in and of itself" as Link does.[85] In this case, the gist of this phrase is that wu, being dependent on yu, is hence not wu of itself. In this reading, li would signify the voidness that is the result of the alternation of yu and wu, i.e. the voidness that results from causation. This interpretation would be in keeping with the chi-se theory, as well as with the Indian PP.

Now we interpret the two following phrases, "wu is not wu", and "li is not li", to be simply denials of the "own-being" or "self-nature" (svabhāva) of both wu and li respectively.[85] Hence we do not read "wu is not wu" as "wu is not (pen) wu" as does Link. We read it rather as "wu is not (tzu-) wu".[87] This avoids imputing a pen wu that is non-contingent; and hence this avoids contradicting the phrase, "li does not make (itself) li". In light of our reading of li as "causally-linked voidness", this latter phrase is seen as an assertion of the voidness of this "causally-linked voidness". Finding this particular idea here in the Preface would lend support for our interpretation of Chih Tun's chi-se

theory which we have understood as distinguishing two aspects of voidness, the "causally-lined voidness" and the voidness of this voidness.[88]

However, if we read li as "causally-linked voidness" then this seems to contradict the central idea in the "Li and Change" passage B 1. above, namely that "li is not within Change, and Change is not within li". Furthermore, in the chi-se theory matter and voidness cannot be separated.

This can be resolved by a slight yet significant adjustment in our reading of wu and li, taking into account the "Li and Change" passage. We suggest that wu could be seen as the "causally-linked voidness" and that li could be seen as the voidness of the "causally-linked voidness". The form of the passage would remain unchanged and our understanding of the phrases, "wu is not wu" and "li is not li" would still hold.

Now we are ready to present a complete translation of the wu and li passage that began this subsection. This translation contradicts neither our understanding of the chi-se theory nor the "Li and Change" passage. Due to the cumbersomeness of the English renderings of wu and li, "causally-linked voidness" will be abbreviated as "c-l V":

> . . . now 'c-l V' (wu), how is it able to be 'c-l V'? 'C-l V' is not able to be 'c-l V' in and of itself; the "Voidness of the 'c-l V'" (li) is also unable to make itself the "Voidness of the 'c-l V'". If the

> "voidness of the 'c-l V'" is unable to make itself, then the "Voidness of the 'c-l V'" is not the "Voidness of the 'c-l V'" (i.e. it is Void). If the 'c-l V' is unable to be the 'c-l V' in and of itself, then the 'c-l V' is not the 'c-l V' (i.e. it is Void) . . .

Now we can summarize what has been learned about Chih Tun's central notion of li:

1. It is an experience that transcends human cognition;

2. It is an experience of the voidness of the "causally-linked voidness";

3. It is devoid of self-nature (svabhāva), and hence cannot be either "essence ontologique" or "Absolutum". In other words, it is void;

4. It has played an important role in the development of Chinese thought, both as
   a. an important precursor of Neo-Confucian metaphysics, and as
   b. a new starting-point in the traditional philosophical conflict between the 'partisans of being' and those of 'nonbeing'.

Now this notion of li accords fully with our reading of the chi-se theory, and furthermore exhibits a highly sensitive understanding of the important PP concept of śūnyatā as we have presented it in chapter 2.

C. A Reconsideration of Chih Tun and Tao-an

Li is clearly the most important term in Chih Tun's "ontology". It occupies an analogous position to that of the term pen wu in Tao-an's. In discussing these two monks in section III above, we concluded that despite the fact that Chih Tun and Tao-an were both concerned with pen wu, (understood as a general term for 'emptiness'

current in the Buddho-Taoist circles of this time), we did not think that there was sufficient evidence to maintain that the two shared a common understanding of pen wu. For Link, Tao-an's understanding of the term is still primarily confined within the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation.[89] In the few passages in Chih Tun's Preface in which this term occurs it seems to be likewise confined. However, Chih Tun's use of the term is "rhetorical" whereas for Link, Tao-an's is not. Since the term li occupies the same position in Chih Tun's system as pen wu does in Tao-an's, then a comparison of how each understood these terms is a meaningful parameter by which to further ascertain their doctrinal affinities.

Clearly, from our research, Chih Tun's li, signifying the voidness of the causally-linked voidness, cannot be seen as being part of the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation; from Link's research, Tao-an's pen wu can be so seen. Hence it is unlikely that these two monks shared a similar understanding of voidness.

Furthermore it seems significant that Chih Tun selected the term li and not the term pen wu to anchor his explanation of voidness in the Preface. There certainly would seem to be a rationale behind this. We do know the title of an essay in which Chih Tun used his chi-se theory to explain pen wu.[90] The fact that he used this theory to explain pen wu can be seen to characterize the difference between his understanding of

voidness and that embodied in the term pen wu. For although in his chi-se theory Chih Tun does distinguish two aspects of voidness, the fact that he chose not to represent these aspects as wu and pen wu indicates that he avoids the contention (that the use of these terms would imply) that śūnyatā śūnyatā ("voidness of voidness") is any more fundamental or "real" than śūnyatā. In doing so Chih Tun avoids what would have been a misunderstanding of the Indian PP that would have arisen if he had remained a prisoner of the t'i-yung pattern (and used pen wu instead). Chih Tun incorporates the two aspects of voidness into his use of the term li and makes clear the idea that neither aspect is capable of generating itself (and hence has no svabhāva). In doing this, he avoids the implication of an ontological essence. The fact that Chih Tun would go against the prevailing thought patterns of his time would seem to indicate a deep understanding of the PP notion of śūnyatā.

V. "Preservation does not preserve": "Voidness does not void"

There still remains one passage from the Preface for our consideration. The passage is unique: it presents a highly sophisticated argument which we find to contain an awareness of the role of man's dualistic thought in establishing "objective supports" and hence preventing men from experiencing voidness. As we have seen in chapter 2, an "objective support" is reified by

vikalpa out of voidness. It is enmeshed in duality because the cognition that creates it accepts it (as well as itself) as existing (vs. non-existing). Humans then "settle down" into these supports, whether they be perceptions, thoughts, or feelings, and take them to be real. Chih Tun begins by introducing his audience to this problem using Taoist terms of transcendence to establish for them the level upon which his argument is to evolve:

> If one preserves Voidness in order to seek Stillness; if one strives after wisdom in order to achieve the mind of forgetfulness; then this wisdom will be insufficient for experiencing Utter Voidness; and this Stillness will be insufficient for experiencing the Arcane Spirit . . .[91]

Chih Tun then proceeds to point out the error that is involved in the problem:

> . . . Why? Because there is preservation in what is preserved (yu tsun yü so tsun); there is Voidness in what is voided (yu wu yü so wu) . . .[92]

When one tries to preserve Voidness, one preserves instead the notions, the objective supports of "preservation" and "Voidness"; when one tries to Void (something) one instead hangs onto the notions of "Voidness" and "something" (i.e. the mind, or any other 'existant'). Thus Chih Tun continues:

> . . . That which is preserved in preservation is not the preservation (of Voidness, i.e. of 'no thing', or of an existent Voidness, literally 'its' preservation, ch'i tsun); that which is striven after in Voidness is not the Voidness (of some thing or existant, lit. 'its' Voidness, ch'i wu). . . .[93]

The basic error here is the assumption of duality between preservation and voidness, between something and nothing. This is inherent in establishing "objective supports". Chih Tun re-emphasizes the error of duality:

> . . . You only know that Voidness makes (something) void (i.e. annihilates); no one knows how to void (so yi wu); You only know that preservation preserves (something); no one knows how to preserve . . .[94]

Chih Tun elaborates that duality comes about when men separate themselves from voidness by establishing it as a goal:

> . . . You strive after voidness in order to forget voidness - therefore it is not the case that in voidness there is (something) voided. You rely on preservation in order to forget preservation - therefore it is not the case that in preservation there is (something) preserved. . . .[95]

Chih Tun suggests a way to resolve the problem:

> . . . it is much better to have no (thought) of how to void (it, i.e. an 'existant'), to forget all about how to preserve (it). If one forgets all about how to preserve (it), then there is no longer any preservation in what is preserved. If one leaves behind all thoughts of how to void (it), then one forgets all about the voidness in what is voided.[96]

In other words, the only way to reach one's goals is to rid oneself of the thinking that produced them.[97]

The passage concludes with a series of Dark Learning rhetorical cliches:

> Forget voidness. Thereby preservation is made mysterious. Preservation is made mysterious and thereby one experiences Utter Voidness. When Utter Voidness is experienced then one forgets the Profound Mystery.

> One forgets the Profound Mystery and thereby has no cognition.
> Then and only then are the two traces emptied of any dependence; and both existence and nonexistence are Darkly Exhausted.[98]

Thus in this passage Chih Tun shows an excellent understanding of the essential PP idea that voidness is not annihilation. This is particularly important in that it appears against a Taoist background that conceived of the wu here used to connote śūnyatā as being opposed to yu ("something"). Chih Tun seems to be directing his argument at an audience that is immersed in this kind of dualistic thinking.

Chih Tun also displays an excellent use of paradox in this passage, particularly as he plays upon the characters tsun ("preservation") and wu ("Voidness"). And the contradictions in his argument are only contradictions to those whose thought is imbued with duality.

Chih Tun's excellent awareness of the problems of duality is not surprising since one entire chapter of the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa sutra is devoted to the doctrine of non-duality. In fact, this is the very chapter in which the passage appears that is so analogous to the extant fragments of Chih Tun's chi-se theory. In this chapter there is a passage that discusses the dualism that is at the basis of any thinking about "taking hold of something". This passage is quite reminiscent of Chih

Tun's argument about preservation:

> . . . When a man thinks he has taken hold of something there is a duality in his mind; when he has no such consciousness he has no consciousness of attainment, not of abandonment. This is to enter the doctrine of non-duality . . .[96]

"Taking hold of something" in this passage is basically the same idea as "preserving (it, or something)" in our passage from Chih Tun. Both are based in duality. Also, this idea of "no consciousness of attainment, nor of abandonment" from the Vimalakīrti is highly analogous to Chih Tun's advice: ". . . It is much better to have no thought of how to void (it), to forget all about how it preserves (it) . . .".

We feel that this awareness of the pitfalls of dualism indicates an awareness of "objective supports" and of the role of cognition in the synthesis of experience out of voidness. We also think that this passage of Chih Tun's implies an awareness that the experience of voidness is a complete and total abandonment of all duality-infested conceptual and perceptual categories, including that of one's self. However we must admit that the evidence for these assertions is evidence by implication rather than evidence that is concretely stated by Chih Tun.

VI. Brief Summary of Our Discussion of the Preface

Thus, in the Preface we have seen that the Taoist influence

is confined to Chih Tun's selection of allusions, terms, and expressions from within the *hsüan hsüeh* world-interpretation. This is done primarily to encourage his audience to become involved in the study of the PP, and secondarily to explain to his audience in readily comprehensible terms certain Buddhist notions and certain of his own idea about the PP. In those few passages in which Chih Tun expresses his own understanding of the aspects and implications of the doctrine of *śūnyatā* ("voidness"), he exhibits to our reading a high level of comprehension of some very sophisticated PP ideas. These include:

1. *svabhāva-śūnyatā* ("the voidness of 'own-being'")
2. *śūnyatā śūnyatā* ("the voidness of voidness")
3. *śūnyatā* as experience
4. the nature of dualistic cognition, with concomitant understanding of the related notions:
   a. voidness is not annihilation
   b. objective supports
5. the use of paradox

We have also found that his understanding of voidness, being free from the *hsüan hsüeh* world-interpretation, distinguishes him from Tao-an's understanding of voidness as *pen wu*.

CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this research to investigate Chih Tun's understanding of the PP within the larger context of the problem of the interaction between the Indian and Chinese cultures. Chih Tun, being the first original thinker of significance in Chinese Buddhism warrants scrutiny as a case study in this complex cultural interaction.

In order to do this we have focused upon a "core problem-area", "ontology", which has guided our selection of problems and ideas. Keeping this in mind, we explored the Chinese background of Chih Tun, concentrating upon the terms and patterns that taken together constitute the world-interpretation of the Dark Learning. We then proceeded to examine the handling that our core problem area receives in the Indian PP. This latter understanding was used as a base line with which to compare Chih Tun's own understanding of the core problem area and to thereby ascertain whether any deviations could be attributed to the influence of the Chinese antecedents. Particularly careful scrutiny was given to Chih Tun's understanding of the important Indian "ontological" notion of *śūnyatā*. His understanding was further delineated by contrasting it with that of his more famous contemporary, Tao-un. The results of this work are contained in the final evaluation.

1. Extant Sources

To begin with, a word must be said about the works of Chih Tun that have come down to us. The surviving fragments of the chi-se theory are meagre; and any of the conclusions that we have drawn from them are drawn in the awareness that the fragments present only a little bit of concrete evidence. Hence we have tried to augment this material by considering the evaluations of this theory that were made by scholars who were more temporally contiguous with it than are we.

It is unfortunate that none of the remainder of Chih Tun's extant writings present a direct discussion of chi-se. However, it has been possible to use certain passages from the Preface that to our reading presuppose this theory. The most concrete evidence for the justification of this approach is the title of an essay no longer extant in which Chih Tun used his chi-se theory to explain pên wu. These passages have served to reinforce our understanding of chi-se.

The remainder of the extant material does not contain any essays or commentaries in which Chih Tun might have concentrated solely upon explaining his own ideas. In addition to the essay in which chi-se is used to explain pên wu, Lu Ch'eng's fifth-century compilation, Fa Lun, and Chih Tun's biography in the Kao Sêng Chuan, mentions the titles of some essays that could have been of this nature: 1. "Guide to the Tao-hsing Ching

(T.224)" with questions by Ho Ching and answers by Chih Tun; 2. "On the Lotus Sutra"; 3. "A Discussion of the Three Vehicles"; 4. "On the Saint Not Having Discursive Knowledge"; 5. "Explanation of the Obscure".[1]

An examination of the list of the works of Chih Tun that have survived shows that, with the exception of the Preface and the chi-se fragments, they are all either eulogies, inscriptions, or poems. These are all typical literary forms of the fourth-century ch'ing-t'an adepts and of certain gentry-monks like Chih Tun. These were certainly not intended to provide a forum for the exposition of one's own doctrines.[2] Furthermore we have argued that the basic intent of the Preface is "rhetorical", and that there are only three passages within it that can be thought of as expressions of Chih Tun's own ideas.

Hence, while it is likely that such works existed, the material that has come down to us from Chih Tun does not include any work the primary concern of which was the expression of his own ideas. Thus the extant corpus does not seem to be truly representative of the breadth of Chih Tun's writings and concerns. Because of this we have been forced to piece together his own original ideas from an admittedly small amount of concrete evidence. Any conclusions that are to be drawn must be tempered by an awareness of just how little of Chih Tun's own theories have survived the ravages of Time.

2. Summary of Findings

To begin with we must reiterate that our discussion of Chih Tun's understanding of the PP has come to focus upon what is perhaps the core idea of these texts, *śūnyatā*. In this discussion we have taken care to see whether or not Chih Tun has remained confined within native Chinese thought patterns (most relevantly, *t'i-yung*) which would have caused his understanding of *śūnyatā* to have been inaccurate from an Indian perspective. This confinement, as we have seen, was the fate that was experienced by Chih Tun's more famous contemporary, Tao-an.

Since we have presented evaluations of Chih Tun's understanding of the PP and the Taoist influences upon it in a somewhat inconsistent manner throughout chapters 3 and 4, let us pull this material together more specifically in light of chapters 1 and 2.

A. Chih Tun's *chi-se* doctrine exhibits a good understanding of the following important notions of the PP that have been summarized at the end of chapter 2:

1. *svabhāva śūnyatā*

a. and causation: It is the very nature of matter (and representing all five *skandhas* and hence all aspects of phenomenal experience) to be unable to exist in and of itself. Hence matter etc. is identical with voidness due to its participation in causal processes.

2. voidness is not the annihilation (of matter etc.)

3. *śūnyatā śūnyatā*: The causally-linked voidness of matter is also void. Thus *śūnyatā* is not an ontological absolute. This is expressed as that aspect of voidness that is apart from causal processes.

4.

a. The acceptance of the relative, non-ontological validity of the empirical world; and b. the use of paradox. These two are exemplified in these phrases from the fragment of the Chi-se . . . Lun:

> . . . This being so (that matter does not exist by itself), it (matter) is void, although matter. Therefore it is said that matter is identical with voidness, and again different from voidness . . .

The saṃvṛti/paramārtha distinction can be seen in this paradox, as well as in the difference between śūnyatā and śūnyatā śūnyatā.

5. Chih Tun seems to have recognized what Wayman and Suzuki have called the "visionary" aspect of śūnyatā.

B. There does not appear to be any substantial evidence of a Taoist influence on this theory.

1. We have noted that since Chih Tun does not conceive of a difference between rūpa and śūnya, between "World" and "Non-world", much less of the latter term in each pair being anterior to the former term, there does not seem to be justification for Liebenthal's application of the t'i-yung pattern. Zürcher concurs.

2. Furthermore the notion that matter does not cause itself to be matter is a denial of the "own-being" (svabhāva) of matter rather than a denial of the t'i that underlies the yung, as Zürcher (and of course Hsiang/Kuo) would have it.

3. Chih Tun does not share Hsiang/Kuo's model of a universe of isolated self-activating phenomena that are interrelated through li. Chih Tun's phenomena are not isolated but rather interrelated through causation.

4. Hsiang/Kuo do not question the ontological validity of their phenomena. Chih Tun clearly does.

Since Chih Tun's chi-se theory does not seem to admit of any evidence of being an expression of the t'i-yung pattern (as found most clearly in Wang Pi), nor of any evidence of concurring with

Hsiang/Kuo's "yung motif", we are tempted to conclude that this theory is not confined within the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation. However, the fragments of the chi-se theory present insufficient evidence with which to ascertain whether or not Chih Tun's understanding of śūnyatā broke decisively enough with the prevailing pen wu interpretation to be considered accurate from the Indian viewpoint. The resolution of this question occurs in Chih Tun's Preface.

The Preface

A. Taoist influence: We have argued that the basic purport of the Preface is rhetorical rather than expository. The intent is primarily to exhort an audience familiar with the Dark Learning (both clergy and laity) to become involved in intensive study of the PP. The intent is only secondarily to explain certain Buddhist ideas that augment the primary intent of the Preface, and to explain certain of his own theories, in a manner in which they could be readily comprehensible to the Taoist audience. The practice of "skillful means" is exhibited through these in the Preface. Our hypothesis is confirmed by the following elements in the Preface:

1. The frequent eulogy of the PP texts expressed within the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation.

2. The explanation of any Buddhist ideas that serve to augment this eulogy in these Neo-Taoist terms, e.g. prajñā/upāya as recognized by Zürcher.

3. The unusual emphasis placed upon the spiritual ideal of the Dark Learning, the Sage (or Perfect Man), and the characterization of this Sage as one who has mastered the PP.

4. The rationale behind the creation of the synoptic edition of the Aṣṭa and Pañca.

Given the intent of the Preface (and the resulting high number of passages that are devoted to "elements" 1-3 above), most of the ideas contained within it as expressed through the Dark Learning world-interpretation cannot be regarded with certainty as being statements of Chih Tun's own theories.

B. There are however four passages that deviate from the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation enough to warrant classification as "technical" expressions.

1. From them we learn that while Chih Tun shared with Tao-an and others of their contemporaries, a concern with pen wu as a general term for "voidness", he differs decisively from Tao-an in his interpretation of "voidness". While both Chih Tun and Tao-an concur that voidness is not the wu of yu/wu, only Chih Tun makes it clear that this voidness (to him symbolized by li, to Tao-an symbolized by pen wu), is also void.

2. Chih Tun's thought in these passages incorporates his chi-se theory. Hence the important notions of the PP that are accurately understood in the chi-se theory are also accurately in these passages from the Preface. Chih Tun emphasizes two in particular:

a. voidness is not annihilation
b. śūnyatā śūnyatā - stated as "wu does not cause itself to be wu".

In addition to these, Chih Tun exhibits a good grasp of the following ideas from our summary of the Indian PP in chapter 2:

c. śūnyatā is an experience
d. the nature of dualistic cognition, and by implication:
- d1. an awareness of "objective supports"
- d2. an awareness of the role of cognition in the synthesis of the phenomenal world.
- d3. an awareness that the experience of śūnyatā (śūnyatā) involves the complete and total abandonment of all conceptual and perceptual categories.

C. However there are a number of ideas from chapter 2 that neither the _chi-se_ theory nor the Preface contain:

1. While this is present _by implication_ from Chih Tun's awareness of dualistic cognition, there is no _explicit_ discussion of the role of human cognitive functioning (_vikālpa_) in the false discrimination of the "empirical" world. Since both Chuang Tzu and Wang Pi are very much concerned with epistemological problems; and since in particular Chuang Tzu in his second chapter, _ch'i wu lun_ is concerned with precisely this problem; the absence of such a discussion in Chih Tun cannot be attributed to the influence of his Chinese background. Perhaps if we had a more representative sampling of his writings this problem would be resolved.

2. While this is also present by implication from Chih Tun's awareness of dualistic cognition, there is no _explicit_ discussion of the "affective correlates" of _śūnyatā_, that is, the _alambāna_ ("objective supports") and "settling down". By way of explanation we suggest that these are culture-bound forms which, while they may express an underlying idea or pattern within one culture, because of their degree of specificity within that culture may be of no use in the expression of this same underlying idea or pattern in another different culture.

3. Although in a general sense the intent of the Preface is soteriological; and although Chih Tun seems aware of this aspect of the PP, we do not find in his thought the same attempt to shock the reader into a radical alteration of his normal cognitive categories. This could be accounted for by the difference in the linguistic systems and cultural backgrounds.

The absence of these three when balanced against the presence of so many other important "ontological" ideas from the PP, and against the unrepresentative (and non-technical) nature of the material from Chih Tun that has survived, does not significantly alter our assessment of him.

Based upon all of the above material we conclude that Chih Tun exhibits a good understanding of the fundamental "ontological"

notions of the Indian PP. In doing so, he has broken away from the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation, particularly away from the t'i-yung pattern that other Buddha-Taoists such as Tao-an seem to have remained confined within.

3. A Final Comment

Chih Tun's surviving writings represent a synthesis between the native Chinese Taoist philosophy and the Indian Prajñāpāramitā in which neither system has remained unchanged. We have found that the Taoist element in this synthesis provides the medium, the framework within which Chih Tun's original thought emerges. Chih Tun's vocabulary, both in his "rhetorical" and his "technical" expressions comes directly from the hsüan hsüeh. It is from the difference in the patterns that underly each of these two classes of expressions that the distinction between them emerges.

It is quite reasonable that Chih Tun should use Taoist terms and allusions when communicating to an audience with which he shared a common background. What is significant is that in his "technical" expressions he was able to alter the meaning of the Taoist terms without rendering them incomprehensible to his fellows. Thus while in the "rhetorical" passages Chih Tun expresses himself within the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation, in his "technical" passages he clearly breaks away from the patterns of this world-interpretation and infuses its vocabulary with new

meaning. It is the Buddhist element in the synthesis that causes this departure.

We have concluded that Chih Tun's "technical" ideas present a good understanding of the central "ontological" notions of the Indian PP. This is significant because it demonstrates that within the dynamics of a particularly complex cultural interaction, replete with numerous potential misunderstandings, some very sophisticated ideas seem to have been accurately communicated. Also our conclusions contravene to an extent the prevailing idea in modern scholarship that the Indian PP was not understood in China until the arrival of Kumarajiva. We suggest that while this may be true of certain other Buddho-Taoists besides Chih Tun, all must be examined with careful scrutiny since it would not surprise us that given the paucity of material that has survived from this epoch, modern scholarship has been forced to rely in some degree upon evaluations of these thinkers initiated by Kumarajiva's own pupils.

As a case study in the dynamics of a cultural interaction, our research on Chih Tun has indicated that in China concepts sufficiently analogous for accurate communication of some quite abstruse Indian ideas must have been found. However there is still one quite relevant question that has haunted our research. This is a question that has not really been seriously asked since

the Buddho-Taoists themselves. Namely, just how similar are the "gnostic" systems fo the Taoists and the *Śūnyavāda*? It is our impression that, for example, the ideas that Chuang Tzu expressed in the *ch'i wu lun* are really quite similar to ideas developed in the Indian *śūnyavāda*. Certainly the Buddho-Taoists saw a high degree of correlation between their Taoist metaphysical systems and those of the PP. Perhaps they were more accurate in their thinking on this matter than they have been given credit for. It is our opinion that not until this question is seriously asked by modern scholarship can we begin to unravel the immense religious and philosophical complexities of this crucial phase of Chinese Buddhism.

FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 Hu Shih, "The Indianization of China: A Case Study in Cultural Borrowing", in Independence, Convergence, and Borrowing in Institutions, Thought, and Art. Cambridge, 1937, p. 223.

2 Liebenthal, Walter, "Shih Hui-yuan's Buddhism as Set Forth in His Writings", JAOS 70:4, 1950, p. 244.

3 Link, A., "Shyh daw-an's Preface to the Yogacarabhumi Sutra and the Problem of Buddha-Taoist Terminology in Early Chinese Buddhism", JAOS, 77, 1957, p. 2; and Robinson, R., Early Madhyamika in India and China. Madison, 1967, p. 7.

4 Demieville, P., "La Pénétration du Bouddhisme Dans la Tradition Philosophique Chinoise". Cahiers D'Histoire Mondiale. I, 1956, p. 19.

5 The three principle Buddho-Taoist thinkers were Chih Tun, Tao-an, and Hui-yuan.

6 Robinson, op. cit., p. 17.

7 T'ang, Yung-t'ung, presents a detailed study of this method: "On Ko-Yi . . ." in Radhakrishnan: Comparative Studies in Philosophy Presented in Honor of His Sixtieth Birthday. London, 1951, pp. 276-86.

8 This study can be found in Fung/Bodde, History of Chinese Philosophy. Princeton, 1953, p. 241. (vol. II).

8a This is, in fact, what Robinson concludes about Hui-yüan's essay, "The Spirit Does Not Perish". c.f., Robinson, op. cit., pp. 104-06.

9 The first three terms are taken from Lancaster, Lewis R., An Analysis of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sutra From the Chinese Translations. Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1968. Facsimile from Microfilm, Ann Arbor, 1972, pp. 391, 392, 386. The remaining two are from Link, op. cit., pp. 1b-2a. To further complicate matters, these terms were not at all consistently applied. E.g., in the two Chinese translations of the Asta, T.224 +226, svabhāva is rendered as tzu-jan; in T. 225, it is rendered as yuan (source, fount). Elsewhere it is rendered as tzu-hsing. c.f. Lancaster, pp. 379, 372.

10 Robinson, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

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11
Demieville, op. cit.; Chan, W.-t., "The Evolution of the Neo-Confucian Concept of Li as Principle", Tsing Hua Journal. 4:2. 1964, pp. 123-49; Chan, W.-t., "The Evolution of the Confucian Concept of Jen", PEW, 4, 1955, pp. 295-319.

12
Liebenthal, Chao Lun. Hong Kong: 1968, pp. 15-23.

13
Ibid., p. 16.

14
Hurvitz, Leon, "Chih Tun's Notions of Prajna", JAOS, 1968, p. 249.

14a
Hereinafter, Aṣṭa and Pañca.

15
Conze, E., Prajñāpāramitā Literature. London, 1960, p. 15.

16
Lancaster, op. cit., pp. 12-20. Lancaster casts considerable doubt upon Chih Ch'ien's authorship of 225; and Hikata challenges the more frequent attribution of 226 to Dharmakriya.

17
Ibid., pp. 25-8. The "Middle" Textual Tradition begins with Kumarajiva, and the "Late" one begins with Hsuan-tsang.

18
Zürcher, Erik, The Buddhist Conquest of China. Leiden: 1959, p. 68; and Conze, op. cit., p. 26.

19
Zurcher, op. cit., p. 64 notes that 222 was lost in an obscure monastery for about 100 years due to the political vicissitudes of the times.

20
Ibid., pp. 63-6.

21
Conze, op. cit., p. 27.

22
Lancaster, op. cit., p. 130.

23
Ibid., pp. 78, 314.

24
Ibid., p. 101.

25
This statement is made 9 years prior to the research of Lancaster. C.f., Robinson's Review of A. Wright's Buddhism in Chinese History. JAOS 79.4, 1959, p. 315.

26
We note that the conclusion for the justification of the approach to the Indian material is based solely upon the research that has been done on the Aṣṭa, since no research of a comparable nature to that of Lancaster has been done for the Pañca.

CHAPTER I: THE TERMS AND PATTERNS OF THE HSÜAN HSÜEH

1 The latter commentary is generally acknowledged to be a composite work, with Kuo Hsiang reworking an earlier version written by Hsiang Hsiu, e.g., c.f., Fung/Bodde, op. cit., p. 207. In recognition of this dual authorship, the author will hereinafter be referred to as Hsiang/Kuo.

2 Wright, A., "Review of A. A. Petrov's Wang Pi: His Place in the History of Chinese Philosophy, HJAS, 10, 1947, p. 85. Since Petrov's work is only in his native Russian, Wright has summarized his work in this review. Thus, we have decided to refer to the ideas expressed in this article as those of Petrov/Wright. C.f. also, Liebenthal, Chao Lun op. cit., p. 18.

3 The usual translation of the term yung is "function". Liebenthal (Chao Lun, p. 18) calls it the "self application of the cosmos" or "self-manifestation". The term t'i is usually rendered as "substance"; but Liebenthal (p. 18) and Arthur Link both agree that this translation is quite misleading since t'i is most often thought of as an underlying "void state" that unfolds itself rather than a substance taking on attributes. (Liebenthal, p. 18). Link prefers "formative aspect" or "fundamental aspect or structure". C.f. Link, "The Taoist Antecedents of Tao-an's Prajna Ontology", HR, Nov. 1969-Feb. 1970, pp. 190-91. We shall leave this term untranslated (except when quoting or citing a certain author's rendering) while allowing the more specific examples of t'i to illustrate this notion.

4 Liebenthal, Chao Lun op. cit., pp. 18-20.

5 Petrov/Wright, op. cit., p. 85.

6 Chan, W.-t., Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy. Princeton: 1963, p. 323.

7 Fung/Bodde, op. cit., p. 181.

8 Loc. cit.

9 T'ang, Yung-t'ung, (translated by Liebenthal), "Wang Pi's New Interpretation of I Ching and Lun Yü", HJAS, 10, 1947, pp. 143-44. Hereinafter: T'ang/Liebenthal.

10 Ibid., p. 145.

11 Petrov/Wright, op. cit., p. 85.

12 Ibid., p. 83.

13 Fung/Bodde, op. cit., p. 186.

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14
Chan, "*Li*" *op. cit.*, p. 131, maintains that Wang's *li* is transcendent; Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. II, Cambridge: 1956, p. 477, maintains precisely the opposite.

15
Fung/Bodde, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-7; T'ang/Liebenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-45; Chan "*Li*", *op. cit.*, pp. 130-31.

16
Petrov/Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

17
Zurcher, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

18
T'ang/Liebenthal, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

19
Chan, *Sourcebook*, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

20
From *ibid.*, p. 153, chapter 25 of Lao Tzu (relevant excerpt):

Man models himself after Earth
Earth models itself after Heaven
Heaven models itself after Tao
Tao models itself after Nature.

The term *tzu-jan* is here translated as "Nature". Literally "self-so", it is also sometimes rendered as "spontaneity".

21
Chan *Sourcebook*, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

22
Both Balazs and Holtzman have done excellent research on this crucial epoch. C.f. Bibliography.

23
Link, "Tao-an", *op. cit.*, p. 183.

24
Balazs, Etienne, *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy*. New Haven: 1964, p. 252. It is perhaps poetic justice, or in the least an ironic twist of fate that P'ei Wei, the man who is remembered for exalting existence died by the sword during a coup d'etat.

25
We do not mean to suggest by this that the qualifications for Liebenthal's definition of "Pattern" are therein met. However, the emphasis upon the phenomenal rather than the noumenal, upon being rather than non-being, upon the sphere of application and manifestation, rather than the sphere of foundation and latency, does interfuse the basic philosophical notions of Hsiang/Kuo's system. And characterizing this system as a *yung* without a *t'i* does provide an underlying framework by which to orient the system within the proper historical perspective and philosophical milieu.

26
C.f. note 21 above.

27
Fung/Bodde, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

28
loc. cit.

29
Ibid., p. 209.

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[30] *Loc. cit.*

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 213.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 211.

[34] *Loc. cit.*

[35] Chan, *Sourcebook*, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

[36] Zurcher, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

[37] Fung, Y.-l., (trans.) *Chuang Tzu*. Shanghai: 1933, p. 51. Hereinafter: Fung Ct.

[38] Chan *Sourcebook*, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 326.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 332.

[41] Demieville, *op. cit.*, p. 30, notes that in fact, Kuo Hsiang was criticized by the Confucian P'ei Wei (c.f. above n. 22, 24), for having turned *li*, the principle of life and being, into a principle of non-being.

[42] Fung Ct, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

[43] Fung/Bodde, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

[44] Chan *Sourcebook*, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

[45] Fung/Bodde, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 217.

[48] Fung Ct, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 139-40.

[50] Chan *Sourcebook*, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 2

1. Conze, E., "The Ontology of the Prajñāparamitā", PEW, 1953, p.117. We adopt the following convention (used by Suzuki): Whenever we speak of the Prajñāpāramitā Sutras they will be abbreviated as PP. Furthermore, all our sources do not follow this convention Thus Sanskrit terms in quotations from these sources will appear as they are in the source.

2. Loc. cit.

3. Suzuki, D. T., "The Philosophy and Religion of the Prajñāpāramitā", On Indian Mahayana Buddhism, London, 1968, p. 41.

4. Suzuki, p. 94.

5. Obermiller, E., "Analysis of the Abhisamayalankara". Calcutta Oriental Series #27, 1933, p. i. (hereafter abbreviated as Obermiller AA.) Interestingly enough, the present text of the Pañca was recast as a commentary on the Abhisamāyalankara. CF. Dutt, N. Pañcaviṁśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā, London 1939, p. xi.

6. Conze, p. 129.

7. Suzuki, p. 57.

8. Conze, E. (trans.) Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā. Calcutta, 1958, p.4. (hereafter abbreviated as Asta).

9. Conze, p. 118: Theravadins: 174; Sarvastivadins: 79; Yogacarins: 100.

10. Conze, p. 120: The mark (lakṣaṇa) of that own-being is that it is contingent, not conditioned, not related to anything other than itself.

11. Obermiller, E., "The Doctrine of the Prajñāpāramitā as Exposed in the Abhisamāyalaṅkāra of Maitreyanatha", AO, 1933, p.37. (hereafter: Obermiller DA)

12. Suzuki, p. 45.

13. Robinson, Richard, The Buddhist Religion. Belmont, 1970, p.52. (hereafter abbreviated as BR)

14. Warder, A. K. Indian Buddhism. Delhi, 1970, p.368.

15. Conze, p. 126.

16. Suzuki, pp. 48-9.

17. Suzuki, p. 49.

18. Suzuki, p. 59.

19. Suzuki, p. 90.

20. Robinson, BR, p. 52.

21. Conze, p. 123. For Warder, vivikta is separation from any nature (prakrti) p. 369.

22. From the Aṣṭasāhasrikā; cited in Warder, p. 369.

23. Warder, p. 399.

24. Conze, p. 126.

25. Suzuki, p. 47.

26. Conze, p. 123.

27. Robinson, BR, p. 52-3.

28. Suzuki, p. 59.

29. Robinson, BR, p. 52.

30. Robinson, R., Early Mādhyamika in India and China. Madison, 1967, p. 48. (hereafter: EMC). Although this statement refers specifically to Nagarjuna, it can be extended by implication to apply to the Prajñā sutras because Robinson believes that there is not really any very substantial difference between the underlying doctrines of the two.

31. Asta, p. 112.

32. Conze, E. (trans.), "The Diamond Sutra" in Buddhist Wisdom Books, London, 1958. 5a, p. 52. (hereafter, BWB).

33. Robinson, BR, p. 53.

34. Warder, p. 368.

35. Conze, p. 121.

36. Warder, p. 368. c.f. above, note 14.

37. Obermiller, DA, p. 38.

38. Obermiller, AA, p. ii.

39. Suzuki, p. 61.

40. Robinson, EMC, p. 49.

41. Robinson, EMC, pp. 48-49.

42. Wayman, A., "Contributions to the Mādhyamika School of Buddhism", JAOS vol. 89, 1969, p. 149.

43. Robinson, BR, p. 53.

44. cf. note 17.

45. Suzuki, p. 40.

46. i.e., as _śūnya_.

47. Aṣṭa, pp. 5-6.

48. Aṣṭa, p. 137.

49. Kyogen said, "It's like a man up a tree hanging from a branch with his mouth; his hands can't grasp a bough, his feet won't reach one. Under the tree there is another man who asks him the meaning of Daruma's coming from the West. If he doesn't answer, he evades his duty. If he answer, he will lose his life. What should he do?" (Blyth, R. H., _Zen and Zen Classics_. Japan, 1966, vol. 4, Mumonkan, pp. 70-1.)

50. Aṣṭa, p. 3.

51. _loc. cit._

52. Suzuki, p. 71.

53. Aṣṭa, p. 117.

54. Suzuki, p. 46.

55. Suzuki, p. 71.

56. Conze, BWB, p. 94.

57. D. T. Suzuki, _Studies in Zen_. New York, 1955, p. 187.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 3

[1] All biographical material is taken from E. Zűrcher, The Buddhist Conquest of China. Leiden, 1959, pp. 166-22. Chih Tun is better known under his style, Tao-lin.

[2] Zurcher, p. 118.

[3] The Fa Lun is now preserved in the Ch'u San Tsang Chi Chi.

[4] Zűrcher, pp. 360-62.

[5] Zűrcher, p. 360.

[6] Yen, K'o-chűn, Ch'űan Shang-ku San-tai Ch'in Han San-kuo Liu-sh'ao Wen, vol. 5, chuan 157, pp. 3-14. Edition of 1964.

[7] Zurcher, p. 124; L. Hurvitz, "Chih Tun's Notions of Prajna", JAOS, 1968, pp. 243-61.

[8] Zurcher, pp. 123-30; Fung/Bodde, History of Chinese Philosophy, vol. II, Princeton, 1953, pp. 249-52; W. Liebenthal, The Book of Chao, Hong Kong, 1968, pp. 138-43; W. T. Chan, Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy, Princeton, 1963, pp. 339-40.

[9] Zűrcher, pp. 122, 363.

[10] Material for the above paragraph is taken from Zurcher, pp. 129-30; Hurvitz, pp. 245-56.

[11] Ch'en, KKS, "Neo-Taoism and the Prajna School During the Wei and Ch'in". CCul, 1957, pp. 33-46.

[12] Zűrcher, pp. 129, 362, 364.

[13] In making this translation we have consulted the Chinese texts available in Yen, p. 5b; and T'ang Yung-t'ung, Han Wei Liang Chin Nan Pei Ch'ao Fo Chiao Shih, Shanghai, 1938, p. 181. Furthermore we have consulted the English translations of several important phrases found in Liebenthal, p. 141 and Zurcher, p. 129.

[14] We have borrowed Burton Watson's phrase to render hsiao-yao since a literal translation is quite meaningless.

CHAPTER 3 (continued)

15 Here we read in accordance with Yen the character se (色), rather than the character shih (適) as found in T'ang. The latter seems to be a mistake.

16 The translation of t'i (體) is suggested by A. Link, "The Taoist Antecedents of Tao-an's Prajna Ontology", HR, 1969-70, pp. 190-91, note 23.

17 Yen reads jen (任); T'ang reads tsai (在). Adopting the latter we render the sense rather than the letter of the phrase.

18 Liebenthal, p. 136 cites this phrase, pu chi erh su (不疾而速) as one used by Hui-yuan in settling a debate between Tao-heng, one propagator of the hsin wu doctrine, and Chu, Fa-t'ai.

19 This phrase is obscure and its translation is extremely tentative. The gist of the passage seems to be a criticism of small, narrow-mindedness that in adhering solely to immediate and expedient gratification and factors loses the proper perspective. In other words, these people "can't see the forest for the trees".

20 Zürcher, p. 129.

21 P. Demieville, "Le Pénétration de Bouddhisme Dans La Tradition Philosophique Chinoise", Cahiers D'Histoire Mondiale, 1956, p. 27.

22 Demieville, p. 21.

23 Demieville, p. 27.

24 Zürcher, p. 129.

25 Arthur Link, "The Taoist Antecedents of Tao-an's Prajñā Ontology", HR, 1969-70, p. 188.

26 Ch'en, p. 35.

27 All above material from Link, pp. 188-89, except Yuan-k'ang's dates, which are from Liebenthal, p. xxxvii.

28 Fung/Bodde II, p. 730; Ch'en, p. 35; Liebenthal, p. xxxvii.

29 Fung/Bodde II, p. 730; Ch'en, p. 35.

CHAPTER 3 (continued)

30 T'ang, p. 232, Link, p. 190. Liebenthal however thinks that both men are the same, p. 12. In subsections B and C, whenever necessary, a text or an author from this list will be followed by the appropriate number from the list to facilitate reading.

31 Link, p. 189; T'ang, p. 231.

32 *Loc. cit.*, Seng-ching provides a list of doctrines only, not their names nor their initiators.

33 T'ang, p. 254.

34 Fung/Bodde II, p. 248.

35 Fung/Bodde II, pp. 248-249; Liebenthal, p. 138, note 724.

36 Fung/Bodde, p. 249.

37 T'ang, p. 254.

38 *Loc. cit.*

39 Liebenthal, p. xvi.

40 T'ang, p. 254.

41 Zürcher, p. 123; Chinese: Yen, p. 4.

42 T'ang, p. 254.

43 Link, pp. 185-86.

44 T'ang, p. 260.

45 *Loc. cit.*

46 Liebenthal, p. 138.

47 C. D. C. Priestley, "The Emptiness of the Unreal" (unpublished manuscript translation), Toronto, 1971, p. 2.

48 T'ang, p. 259. Liebenthal (p. 139) thinks this latter treatise gave its name to the school of Chih Tun.

49 Zürcher, p. 123.

50 T'ang, p. 259.

51 Zürcher, p. 123.

CHAPTER 3 (continued)

52 Fung/Bodde, p. 249.

53 *Loc. cit.*

54 Fung/Bodde, p. 250.

55 Cf. above and Zürcher, p. 123.

56 Fung/Bodde, p. 250.

57 *Loc. cit.*

58 Fung/Bodde, p. 251.

59 Priestley, p. 2.

60 T'ang, pp. 260-61.

61 *Loc. cit.*

62 One should here note that Suzuki makes this point in explicating the notion of *prajñā*. Cf. above section on Indian PP.

63 The distinction is not explicitly present in the material but is introduced in order to clarify the topic of discussion.

64 R. Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China*, Madison, 1964, p. 312, note 9.

65 Fung/Bodde, p. 252.

66 *Loc. cit.*

67 Liebenthal, p. 140.

68 *Loc. cit.*

69 *Loc. cit.*

70 *Loc. cit.*

71 Zürcher, p. 123.

72 Zürcher, pp. 123-24.

73 Cf. Fung/Bodde, pp. 250-52.

74 Cf. p. 15 above.

75 T'ang, p. 259.

CHAPTER 3 (continued)

76
Cf. section III A above.

77
T'ang, p. 259.

78
Cf. section III C above, pp. 13-14.

79
T'ang, p. 261.

80
Zürcher, p. 123; Robinson, p. 312, agrees in principle.

81
Cf. pp. 3-6 above, section II.

82
T'ang, p. 259; Zurcher, p. 362.

83
Zürcher, p. 362; the underlined is written:色卽是空。非色滅空
The corresponding segment of Chih Tun reads: 卽色是空。非色滅空

84
Zürcher, p. 123.

85
Zürcher, pp. 50, 131-32.

86
Cf. Robinson, p. 224, Priestley, p. 3, Liebenthal, Chao Lun, p. 58.

87
Cf. above: Suzuki: pp. 22-3; Wayman: p. 29. Rather than recapitulate their arguments we ask the reader to return to the Indian section and examine them once again.

88
Wayman, "Contributions . . . ," p. 149.

89
Cf. above, p. 23.

90
Cf. above, p. 51.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 4

1 Hurvitz, Leon, "Chih Tun's Notions of Prajñā", JAOS, 1968, p. 249; and Yen, K'o Chun, edition of 1900.

2 *Aṣṭa*: T. 224; *Pañca*: T. 221. c.f. Link, Arthur, "The Taoist Antecedents of Tao-an's *Prajñā* Ontology". HR, 1969-70, p. 184, n. 10.

3 Zürcher, Erik, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*. Leiden, 1959, p. 124.

4 *Loc. cit.*

5 Hurvitz, p. 251.

6 C.f., *Lao-tzu*, chapter 1, *Chuang-tzu*, chapter 2.

7 C.f. above, ch. 1, p. 9.

8 C.f. *Lao-tzu*, c. 6, 28.

9 C.f. e.g. ch. 16.

10 C.f. above, p. 6.

11 C.f. above p. xiii, ix, 1-2.

12 Zürcher, p. 124.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 363.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 124.

15 C.f. above, p. 15.

16 Zürcher, p. 125.

17 Hurvitz, pp. 159-60.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 258.

19 "Pure conversation" - a kind of genteel dueling using Taoist cosmic concepts rather than swords. Practiced throughout the period of the Dark Learning.

20 C.f. above, p. 40.

21 Zürcher, p. 120.

22 Ibid., p. 131.

CHAPTER 4 (continued)

23
Hurvitz, p. 256.

24
Ibid., p. 256, n. 50.

25
Ibid., p. 256.

26
Loc. cit.

27
Zurcher, p. 125.

28
Hurvitz, p. 259.

29
For example, the notion that the Sage leads beings towards enlightenment through his compassionate teachings is in the least, as Zürcher says (c.f. above, p. 73, and Zürcher, p. 125), a "hybridization of the Buddhist *prajñā/upāyā* with the Taoist sagely inner mind/outer teachings, if not an example of the latter being used as a vehicle of expression for the former. Actually, in context, the emphasis upon the Sage represents more a legitimization of the Buddha and the PP than a true blending. (c.f. above, p. 73, etc.)

30
This is, incidentally, a corollary to the equation made at the beginning of the Preface between the "triple escape" (i.e. Buddhist enlightenment) and the "double mystery" (i.e. Taoist enlightenment) and the "double mystery" (i.e. Taoist enlightenment. For explanations of these c.f. Hurvitz, p. 249, n.4). This also appears to be an example of the Taoist term serving as a vehicle of legitimization for the Buddhist one.

31
Hurvitz, p. 255. The description is pure *hsüan hsüeh*. In particular, the phrase 'There is nothing to be added to him' is analogous to Chuang-tzu's description of the 'Men of Old' in ch. 2 (c.f. Watson, p. 41). The last sentence about "fish traps" clearly alludes to *Chuang Tzu*, ch. 26 (Watson, pp. 301-2).

32
Link does discuss this distinction but not in reference to Chih Tun. pp. 202-03.

33
C.f. above, pp. 66-67.

34
Link.

35
Hurvitz, p. 249.

36
Link, p. 197. Yen, K'o-chün, chuan 157, 642:
其為經,至無,空豁,廓然,無物者也

37
This particular term first appears in Lokaksema's *Aṣṭa* (T.224) as a translation for *tāthatā* ("suchness"). It also appears

37 (continued)
in Moksala's Pañca as a translation for this same Indian term. (Zürcher, p. 391). Although it does not appear at all in the hsüan hsüeh writings, T'ang, Link argues as Zürcher does, that, "its very form seems to indicate a Taoist or hsüan hsüeh origin." (Zürcher, p. 191).

38
Link, p. 195.

39
Loc. cit.

40
hsu: 虛 k'ung: 空 Link, p. 197.

41
Link, p. 197.

42
Loc. cit.

43
Loc. cit.

44
C.f. above, p. 39.

45
Link, pp. 197-8, n.43.

46
Link, p. 198.

47
There is also listed a pen wu i tsung ("Variant School of Original Nonbeing"), attributed to Chu, Tao-ch'ien. For the little that is known about it c.f.: Liebenthal, Book of Chao, 1968, p. 146; Link, pp. 188-9; and Zürcher, pp. 137-8, 148.

48
Zürcher, p. 191.

49
Link, p. 184.

50
There are two specific occurrences of pen wu in the Preface. They both appear in remarkably similar circumstances, both in connection with the term chu fo (諸佛), "the Buddhas".

a. The first appears at the end of a long laudatory paragraph to the PP texts that begins (Yen, k'o-chün, ch. 157, 6A2) with the words "As a Scripture . . .

. . . (it) clarifies that at the beginning of the Buddhas there was the exhaustion of the original emptiness (pen wu) of the various numina . . . .

The Chinese reads: (6A2) 其為經 . . .

(6A3-4) 明諸佛之始有盡羣靈之本無

b. The second occurrence is at the end of a long passage that describes the exemplary action of the Buddhas. This begins in 6B7 with the words, ". . . the Buddhas . . .

. . . have returned the various numina to original emptiness . . .

The Chinese reads: (6B7) 諸佛 . . .

(6B9) 還羣靈乎本無

CHAPTER 4 (continued)

50 (continued)
Neither of these occurrences represents a doctrinally significant use of the term because it is clear from the respective contexts that their use in each case is in association with eulogies that can only be characterized as "rhetorical". And although it has been suggested (Link, p. 184) that pen wu in the Preface is used to signify tāthatā (as in T. 224, 221), an examination of the contexts of each shows that they are both used within the t'i-yung pattern. Hence they do not deviate from the hsüan hsüeh world-interpretation, and cannot be classified as "technical".

51
Link, p. 197, Liebenthal, p. 146.

52
Another indication that the Preface is directed at the Buddha-Taoist clergy is the statement (Hurvitz, p. 256) by Chih Tun that his "Synoptic Extract" will aid those who ". . . aspire to atone the texts . . .". This is based on the assumption that chanting was a regular element of the Buddhist monastic life during this period.

53
T'ang does not focus his attention upon the conception of li.

54
Demieville, "Le Pénétration de Bouddhisme Dans La Tradition Philosophique Chinoise", Cahiers D'Histoire Mondiale, 1956.

55
Zürcher, pp. 125-7; Wright, A., Buddhism in Chinese History, p. 47; Liebenthal, pp. 141-3; Hurvitz, pp. 247-8; Chan, "The Evolution of the Neo-Confucian Concept of Li as Principle". Tsing Hua Journal, 1964, pp. 132-3.

56
Demieville, pp. 29-32; Chan, "Li . . ."

57
Demieville, p. 30.

58
Hurvitz, pp. 247-8.

59
Demieville, pp. 29-30.

60
Yen, K'o-chün, ch. 157, 7A2-4.

61
Demieville, p. 30.

62
Ibid., p. 31.

63
Zürcher, p. 126.

64
Loc. cit.

65
Zürcher, p. 125.

66
Wright, p. 47.

CHAPTER 4 (continued)

67
Demieville, p. 32.
68
Loc. cit.
69
Loc. cit.
70
Zürcher, p. 125.
71
Yen, K'o-chün, ch. 157, 7A5: 理致同乎歸
For "return" c.f. *Lao-tzu*, chapter 16.
72
Zürcher, p. 124.
73
Yen, K'o-chün, ch. 157, 6A9: 名生於彼 理無言
Here we take the character *pi* (彼) to signify duality. We feel that Chih Tun uses this word as a succinct evocation of the *shih/pi* (是彼) dichotomy that occurs in several places in Chuang Tzu's *ch'i wu lun*. In this chapter these two terms symbolize the most basic duality, that between "It" and "Other".
Zürcher also notes the allusion to Chuang Tzu (p. 363, n. 225). This is a good example of the subtlety that so characterizes the Buddho-Taoist writings.
74
Yen, K'o-chun, ch. 157, 6A11: 理冥則言廢
75
Demieville, p. 32.
76
C.f. above, pp. 29-31.
77
Hurvitz, p. 250, n. 7.
78
Yen, K'o-chün, ch. 157, 6A5-6:
夫無為也豈能無哉 無不能自無 理亦不能為理
理不能為理 則理非理矣 無不能自無 則無非無矣

We feel that our translation of *wei* (為) is justified by the obvious parallelism between 為理 and 自無 as reinforced by the character *yi* (亦), "also".
79
Link, pp. 198-9.
80
Hurvitz, p. 250; Liebenthal, p. 143.
81
Liebenthal, p. 143.
82
Hurvitz, p. 247; Zürcher, p. 126; Demieville, p. 30.
83
We are assuming here that *li* and *pen wu*, if not synonomous, then are at least closely enough linked together to make Link's interpretation contradict the *li*-argument in the passage.

84
In fact, Chih Tun, as we have seen, did use his <u>chi-se</u> theory to explain <u>pen wu</u>. C.f., p. 85 above.

85
This argument we are beginning is more easily followed by referring back to the "<u>li/wu</u>" passage that begins this subsection.

86
To our reading, these phrases, 無非無 and 理非理 are denials of their opposites, i.e., 無無也 and 理理也 which we read as assertions of "own-being" by reaffirmation.

87
I.e., 無非(自)無 and not 無非(本)無 .

88
C.f. above, pp. 67-70.

89
Link, p. 215:

". . . I think we are justified in speculating that, for Tao-an, <u>Prajñā</u>, 'gnostic wisdom', that is, the perfect comprehension of emptiness (<u>śūnyatā</u>) was the equivalent of <u>Pen-wu</u>, the basic and indefinable source of all things; further, that he never succeeded in entirely excluding from his thought the temporal aspects that this conception held as, in one of its forms, a Taoist theory of world origination . . .

90
C.f. above, p. 85, and note 84.

91
Yen, K'o-chün, ch. 157, 6B1-2. The entire passage that we will be dealing with runs from 6B1 to 6B7.

92 何則 故有存於所存
有無於所無

93 存乎存者 非其存也
希乎無者 非其無也

94 徒知無之為無 莫知所以無
知存之為存 莫知所以存

95 希無以忘無 故非無之所無
寄存以忘存 故非存之所存

96
The "it" in our translation is suggested by the <u>ch'i</u> (其) of the phrase <u>chi so yi wu</u> 其所以無 , in which the <u>ch'i</u> refers back grammatically to an understood possessor of <u>so yi wu</u>. Literally translated, this would be "its 'how to void'".

莫若無其所以無，忘其所以存。忘其所以存則無存於所存，遺其所以無則忘無於所無

CHAPTER 4 (continued)

97 This expresses basically the same idea as this passage in The Awakening of Faith. We cite this not to indicate influence, but rather to indicate that Chih Tun's thinking here is in line with general Mahayana notions that he would not have understood had he remained within the hsuan hsueh world-interpretation.

> . . . It is like the case of a man who has lost his way: he is confused because of (his wrong sense of) direction. If he is freed from (the notion of) direction altogether, then there will be no such thing as going astray. It is the same with men: because of (the notion of) enlightenment, they are confused. But if they are freed from (the fixed notion of) enlightenment, then there will be no such thing as non-enlightenment . . .

from: Hakeda, Yoshido, The Awakening of Faith, New York: 1967, p. 43.

98 Yen, K'o-chűn, ch. 157, 6B6-7.

99 Hokei Idumi (trans.) Vimalakirti-Nirdesa Sutra, Eastern Buddhist, 1922-28, IV, p. 182. This English translation is based primarily on Kumarajiva's text with consultation of the other Chinese translations. Since the passage about form and emptiness from Chih Ch'ien's translation that was so similar to Chih Tun's chi-se theory (c.f. above, p. 66-7) is also in Kumarajiva's version, there is no reason to doubt that this passage which we have just cited appears also in Chih Ch'ien's translation, the one with which Chih Tun would have been familiar.

CONCLUSION

1. Zűrcher, pp. 361-2.

2. Ibid., p. 127.

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